Saturday November 4 1995

Abu Dhabi D 8.50 Albania L 220 Andorra FF 9 Austria AS 28 Bahrain BD 0.80 Belgium BF 60 Bulgaria L 120 Croatia KN 12.50 Cyprus CE 0.90 Czech Republic KC45 Denmark DK 14 Dubai D 8.50 Egypt EE 5 Estonia K 30 Finland FM 11 France FF 10 Germany DM 3.50 Greece D 350 Hong Kong HK$ 23 Hungary F 185 Iceland IK 185 India Rs 55 Israel NIS 8 90 Italy L 2,800 Jordan JD 1.00 Kuwait KD 0.50 Latvia US$ 2 Lebanon US$ 1.50 Lithuania US$ 2 Luxembourg LF 55 Madeira E 260 Malta ML 0.43 Morocco D 15 Netherlands G 3.75 Norway NK 15 Oman OR 1.00 Pakistan R 70 Poland Z 5.70 Portugal E 230 Qatar QR 8.50 Russia US$ 2.00 Saudi Arabia R 10 Slovakia SK 45 Slovenia SLT 260 Spain P 200 Sweden SK 15 Switzerland SF 3 Thailand B 80 Tunisia TD 1.750 Turkey TL 95,000 Ukraine US$ 2.00 USA US$ 2.75

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Fred West admitted Cromwell Street killings, police tapes reveal

'I have not told you the whole truth. From the very first day of this inquiry my concern has been to protect other person or persons'

Duncan Campbell

FREDERICK WEST, who was found hanging in his prison cell on 1 January, yesterday pleaded his wife's case from beyond the grave. The jury in the trial of Rosemary West heard him admit on tape to all the 10 murders with which she is charged and say his wife was innocent.

But he changed his story vastly throughout 145 tape-recordings of interviews with police, lasting 108 hours, and in one of the final sessions said: "I have not told you the whole truth. From the very first day of this inquiry my concern has been to protect other person or persons."

Rosemary West dabbed her eyes at Winchester crown court yesterday as he was heard to describe how he had killed their oldest child, Heather, to "wipe the smirk off her face".

He said he had killed many of the young women whose bodies were found last year at the Wests' home in 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, because they had fallen in love with him and had threatened to tell his wife.

Speaking in an affable, matter-of-fact way with a West Country accent, Frederick West told two teams of detectives how he had strangled, dismembered and buried the women and girls. Only his eight-year-old stepdaughter, Charmaine, had not been dismembered, he said, because "she was pure".

Indicating to the detectives where they would find the bodies, he talked as if he were a jobbing builder discussing details with an architect. He showed hardly any sign of remorse or grief, justifying many of the killings on the grounds that, he said, the women were prostitutes who had insulted his wife.

On the 21st day of Rosemary West's trial, a jury of seven men and four women silently listened to the recordings.

Fred West said many of the women had been killed after he had had affairs with them. "Every one of them did exactly the same thing." He said they wanted to come and live with him or told him they were pregnant and would tell Rose.

He could not remember most of their names, although he recalled the make and year of the car in which he killed his stepdaughter, Charmaine, aged eight. On the tapes, he said he killed his first wife, Rena, because she had come to take away Charmaine. He then strangled Charmaine when, after burying her mother, he found her asleep after being given a bottle of lager to drink.

Rosemary West gazed at the floor as her husband's voice spoke of Heather, aged 16. He said he had killed her because she wanted to leave home and threatened to give the younger children acid and make them jump off the church roof next door if he would not let her go. "She had a sort of smirk on her face . . . I lunged at her . . . I grabbed her round the throat . . . the next minute she's gone blue."

His wife had been out shopping at the time, he said. He had cut off Heather's head and legs with an ice knife and put her behind the Wendy house in the back garden.

He said he often stood on the spot where Heather was buried. "I spent hours wishing to God she'd just come back up to me." But in other interviews he told detectives Heather was still alive and working for a drugs cartel in Bahrain.

Detective-constables Darren Law and Geoffrey Morgan, who carried out the interviews, told the court he had lied, lied and lied again. He had claimed many of the deaths had been accidental — "enjoyment turned to disaster".

At the end of the day, the trial judge, Mr Justice Mantell, told the jury: "The end is almost in sight". They will hear closing speeches for the prosecution and defence next week and will probably be sent out to consider their verdict the following week.

Major faces summit wrath

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

A DEFIANT John Major made clear last night that he would not withdraw his controversial support for French nuclear testing in the Pacific at next week's Commonwealth conference in New Zealand despite signs that Britain's Commonwealth partners, and even the royal family, intend to put the Government into a minority of one on the issue.

Downing Street's pledge that Mr Major would not allow himself to be put in the dock came as the Australian prime minister, Paul Keating, promised to give Mr Major "a clip round the ear" over the issue, and the Duke of Edinburgh, in more elliptical terms, called for a moratorium on the tests pending an inquiry into the environmental impact of the underground explosions on Moruroa Atoll.

The Commonwealth conference, to which Mr Major flies out on Tuesday morning, now promises to be dominated by the issue of the tests.

A Downing Street spokesman said it would be "perverse and hypocritical" for Mr Major to withdraw his support for the French president, Jacques Chirac, over the issue.

"If this is going to be a one issue conference, then the responsibilty will not lie with us. If other countries want to overshadow the meeting with all this, that is a matter for them," he said.

The Duke of Edinburgh, already in New Zealand with the Queen, launched his criticisms of the nuclear tests as international president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, but took the unusual step of associating the rest of his family with his remarks, a clear sign of the Queen's own displeasure at the tests.

Mr Keating, who enjoys close relations with the Labour leader Tony Blair, was also scathing about Mr Major's personal style at the Commonwealth conferences.

He said: "John Major sort of runs these conferences, with a bit of a schoolmarmish sort of approach, because Britain always saw itself as leader of the Commonwealth and setting the agenda.

"Well, I think we're going to give him a little smack with the ruler . . . We're going to tell him that when a democracy like France decides to let the rest of the world know that non-proliferation doesn't matter, and that they'll detonate explosions in French Polynesia, then a body like the Commonwealth should make its position clear and condemn such actions."

Asked if he was planning to clip Mr Major round the ear, Mr Keating said: "If I can get a shot at him, yes."

Mr Major's host, Jim Bulger, the New Zealand premier, is unlikely to be much more welcoming, whilst one New Zealand opposition leader has already vowed to boycott a lunch in honour of Mr Major, saying he is coming with "radioactive fingertips".

The Prime Minister had already braced himself for Greenpeace-led anti-nuclear demonstrations when he arrives in Auckland, but could not have expected also to be challenged by Prince Philip.

Speaking at a press conference in Wellington on Thursday, the Duke of Edinburgh stopped short of condemning the tests, saying: "There is a suspicion that it's doing damage. If you're concerned with conservation, you want to make sure it isn't".

In Geneva, Dr Claude Martin, director general of the World Wide Fund for Nature, said the Duke had expressed repeated concern at the tests. "I think his concern is a genuine one," he said.

The timing and venue of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting is especially unfortunate for Mr Major. Britain had been hoping that the summit would focus on ways of bolstering democracy in the Commonwealth, which has three members under military rule — Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia.

Officials played down expectations of draconian sanctions against Nigeria, which provoked an international outcry earlier this week by passing death sentences on nine minority rights activists.

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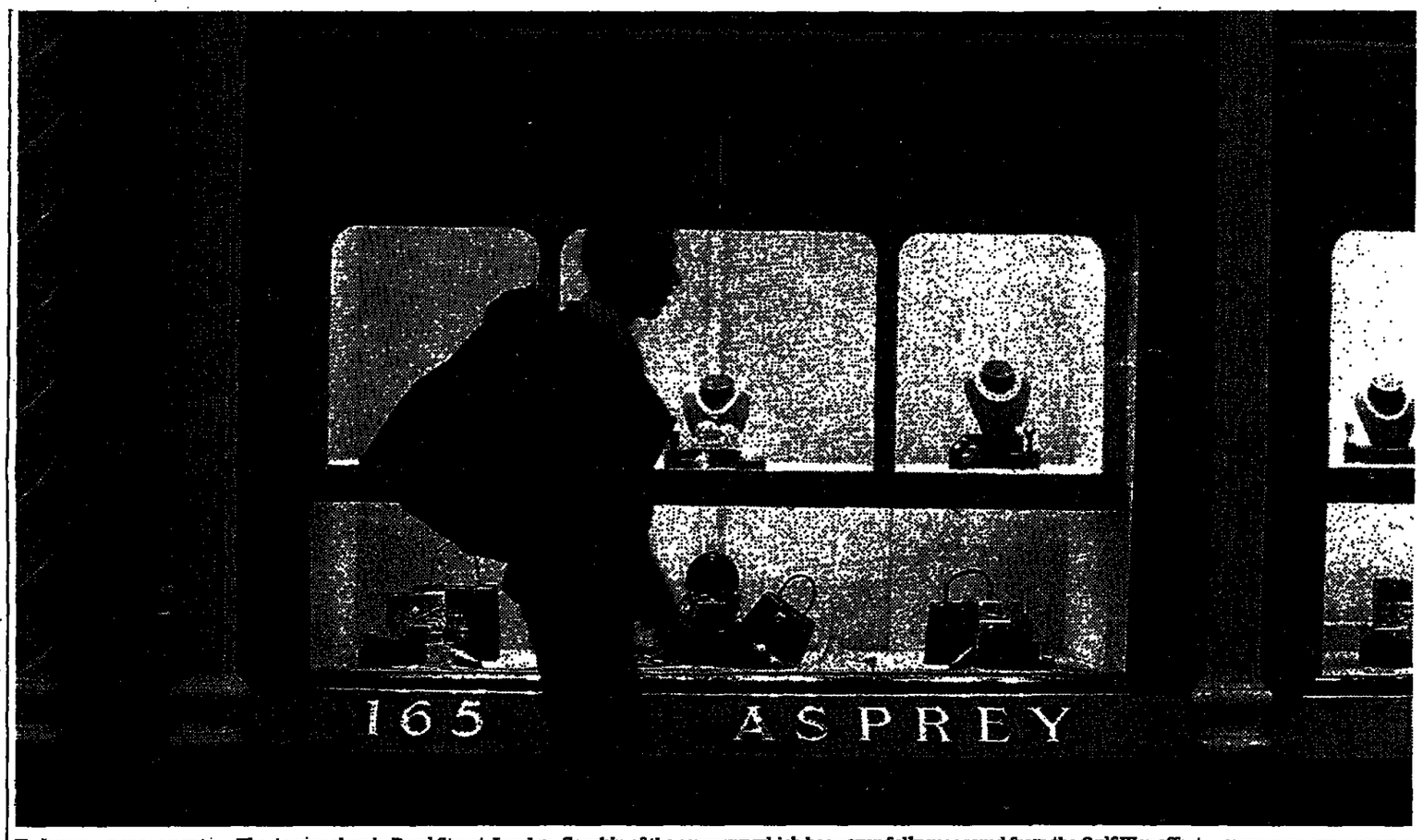

Under new management . . . The Asprey shop in Bond Street, London, flagship of the company which has never fully recovered from the Gulf War effect PHOTOGRAPH: KIPPA MATTHEWS

Prince buys Asprey for £243 million

Pauline Springett

ASPREY, jeweller to the Queen, has been bought by one of its best customers, Prince Jefri Bolkiah of Brunei.

The prince, one of the world's richest men and an old friend of the Asprey family, has stepped in with a £243.5 million offer for the troubled company.

Asprey has been suffering from a drop in demand for its expensive products from its most prized Arab customers ever since the Gulf war.

The prince, younger brother of the Sultan of Brunei, who is reputedly worth £20 billion, is currently converting the former Playboy Club in Park Lane, London, into a palace. He is also transforming one of the Brunei family's three mansions in Hampstead into a gymnasium.

The recommended offer has the blessing of the Aspreys, who own 51.7 per cent of the firm, founded in 1781 by William Asprey, great-great-great-grandfather of the present chairman, John Asprey. The deal will net the family £83 million in cash, and it will retain 10 per cent of the company's shares.

Prince Jefri Bolkiah . . . 'off the cuff chat' led to deal

A spokeswoman said the takeover was the result of "an off-the-cuff conversation a long time ago".

Asprey boasts a stable of jewellery outlets, several of which were bought relatively recently. It bought Mappin & Webb and Garrard from Sears in 1990 for £75 million. Watches of Switzerland was purchased for £23 million in 1992, while the niche watch and jewellery chain Les Ambassadeurs was one of the prizes secured in 1993 for £10.8 million when Asprey acquired the antiques specialist, Ronald A. Lee.

The company's diversification strategy attracted criticism from the City, particularly after poor recent results.

Earlier this year, the company sank into the red to the tune of nearly £10 million.

Yesterday Asprey reported a half-year slump in profits at £1.2 million, down from £3 million in 1994.

The new-look Asprey is to be spearheaded by Ian Dahl, who joined as chief executive in September. Mr Dahl, a retail consultant who has worked for Marks & Spencer, said his approach would differ from that of his predecessor, Naim Attallah, who stepped down yesterday. "I think anyone who knows us would say we are very different individuals." His immediate plan was to invest in Asprey's existing brands.

The colourful Mr Attallah had already flagged his intention to leave the company once Mr Dahl was established. The spokeswoman said Mr Attallah had left with a £300,000 pay-off, reflecting the salary due for the one unexpired year of his contract.

Mr Attallah, famed for his charm, and his penchant for wearing odd socks, has been an important ambassador for Asprey during his 20 years with the company, and was particularly valued for his skill in wooing Middle Eastern clients.

Asprey was coy yesterday about how much its goods sell for, although the spokeswoman pointed out that customers could spend as little as £6 or £7 on a pack of cards. Probably its best known trinket is the Asprey Princess Egg, set with 220 carats of diamonds in 18-carat white gold, which experts estimate is worth more than £2 million.

'Pay for cervical smears' letter stokes NHS rationing row

Chris Mihill, Medical Correspondent

A FAMILY doctor practice which has told women they will have to pay privately if they want frequent cervical smears yesterday sparked a new row over rationing within the health

The Labour Party said the incident was another sign of the growing privatisation of the NHS, and would worry women who would feel obliged to pay for the treatment to protect their health.

Dr John Young and his partners, from the Boundary House practice in Bracknell, Berkshire, have written to smears, telling them that "due to financial restraints" the practice can only offer them a smear every five years on the health service. "We would recommend a cervical smear every three years," the letter states. "At present for this to be possible you would have to attend a private clinic for the smear and the process-

tails about this if you wish."

Mandy Williams, a local county councillor who was sent a copy of the letter by an upset patient, said yesterday: "The woman said she objected to GPs peddling private clinics. She was very concerned about it. She felt if a five-year gap was too long,

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Cardinal's Intestine was one name suggested but Bishops Finger sounded so much more mouthwatering.

THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

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Statistics chart a rising suicide rate among New Zealand's young

Death in land of plenty

A troubled society tries to explain a teenage death rate close to Finland's, writes Andrew Higgins

IT IS a lifestyle most British teenagers can only dream about: weekend skiing on mountains as magnificent as the Alps, a boat as well as car, stretches of beach, and bars galore.

So why, with so much to live for, do the young people of New Zealand choose to kill themselves?

"There is a myth that New Zealand is the land of milk and honey. It is not true," said Barbara Disley, director of Auckland's Mental Health Foundation.

Among teenagers aged between 15 and 19, the suicide rate is more than three times Britain's. Only Finland comes close to matching such a morbid mood. Each year, according to World Health Organisation statistics, nearly 16 out of every 100,000 New Zealanders in this age group take their own lives, compared with 15 in Finland, 11 in the United States, 7.2 in Bulgaria, and 4.3 in Britain.

"If anything, the real figure in our country is even higher," said Ms Disley. New Zealand has an unusually large number of fatal car crashes involving teenagers. Such deaths, though often clearly intentional, tend to be recorded as accidents.

"It is not considered appropriate here to acknowledge emotional or psychological problems. The attitude is 'pull yourself together and get on with the job'."

Psychiatrists and social workers agree that something is seriously wrong but disagree on what. Youth suicide has become a much debated riddle, prompting numerous theories, widespread concern and few clear answers.

The Canterbury Suicide Project, a group of experts studying the problem, has suggested that New Zealand's teenagers may be no more suicidal, just more successful in acting on such urges. "It might be that New Zealanders are just a lot more efficient at killing themselves," said David Fergusson, a researcher. Young New Zealand men commit suicide six times more frequently than young women. The difference is explained in part by their different methods: women often take pills and survive; men choose violent, and usually irreversible, techniques.

Another possible reason is that young New Zealand men are more vulnerable in an isolated society that glorifies rugby, mistrusts introspection and scoffs at mental problems. "The pressure on men to conform to rugby culture is very strong," said Felix Donnelly, who runs Youth Link Family Trust, a hostel for troubled adolescents.

On a recent visit to an Auckland school after a suicide he found students fascinated, more than upset, by the death. "They regretted he couldn't enjoy the funeral."

In a country that offers universal health care, free schooling and comprehensive social welfare, the youth suicide rate has doubled since 1986. Particularly prone to suicide are Maoris. Compared with whites, who make up over 85 per cent of the population, Maoris have a far lower standard of living, suffer a high incidence of alcholism and risk a unique form of acute depression called *whakamomori*.

Hong Kong's dead emigrants cause chaos as Chinese ship out their ancestors

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

AN INCREASING influx of Chinese arrivals from Hong Kong is causing congestion in the San Francisco Bay area — even although they are all dead.

Thousands of boxes of human bones and ashes exhumed from cemeteries in the British colony have been arriving in the Californian city as Hong Kong Chinese, worried about the territory's reversion to Beijing in 1997, ship out the remains of their ancestors.

They fear the communist authorities will build roads or offices over graveyards, as they have on the mainland.

It is a curious reversal of traditional immigration. Formerly, immigrants to California, who established the West's largest overseas Chinese community in the San Francisco Bay area, always sent their dead back to China.

"It is traditional to honour our ancestors, and now that means reburying them here," said Li Fong, of a Chinese insurance association in San Francisco.

But space is at a premium. Surrounded by water on three sides, San Francisco has always been short of burial space. For decades, residents have gone to their final resting place in a municipality set aside for the purpose, called Colma.

This two square-mile city now contains nearly 2 million graves — more than double San Francisco's population. It has 17 cemeteries for dozens of nationalities and religions, including Jews, Greeks, and Chinese, but no post office or school. But the number of vacant lots is dwindling.

Two years ago prices of prime spaces in one cemetery were almost doubled, and a 13.5-acre graveyard for Chinese people which opened in Colma in 1993 — landscaped to conform with the Chinese *feng-shui* spirits that govern architecture — is filling up.

As in life, the dead rich have less to worry about. The luxury Skylawn Park cemetery, south of Colma in coastal Half Moon Bay, offers family plots costing more than a home: up to $237,000 (£180,000). For this, the deceased have a splendid view of the Pacific from a hill dotted with cypress trees, fountains and arches.

War court's peace plan for Bosnia

THE UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague has written to the United States ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, raising the possibility of making a Bosnian peace deal contingent on the surrender of Bosnian Serb leaders to face genocide charges.

The New York Times said the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, had requested that the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, and the military chief, General Ratko Mladic, surrender to the tribunal to face genocide charges as part of any peace deal. — Reuter.

David Owen interview, Outlook, page 17

Bus strike . . . A man inspects damage caused by a billboard toppled in Parañaque near Manila by "super-typhoon" Angela, which battered the Philippines yesterday, killing 66 people cf85,6PHOTOGRAPH: ALBERTO MÁRQUEZ

The weather in Europe

Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	22	11	S
Amsterdam	8	0	F
Athens	18	10	Sh
Berlin	4	-3	S
Bonn	7	-2	S
Brussels	8	-1	S
Copenhagen	3	-4	F
Crete	20	14	Sh
Geneva	7	-2	C
Larnaca	24	14	S
London	9	5	F
Madrid	18	9	F
Milan	10	6	Sh
Nice	14	6	C
Oslo	-2	-8	S
Paris	9	5	F
Rome	15	5	R
Stockholm	1	-5	F
Tunis	21	13	Sh
Vienna	4	1	Sb

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	25	13	S
Amsterdam	9	0	F
Athens	15	8	Th
Berlin	4	-3	F
Bonn	4	-4	S
Brussels	5	-1	S
Copenhagen	6	-2	F
Crete	20	14	Sh
Geneva	8	-2	C
Larnaca	22	14	S
London	10	4	F
Madrid	19	9	F
Milan	9	2	Sh
Nice	13	8	C
Oslo	2	-5	S
Paris	11	6	F
Rome	12	2	S
Stockholm	2	-5	F
Tunis	20	13	Sh
Vienna	4	-3	C

Monday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	23	13	F
Amsterdam	9	-2	Fg
Athens	16	10	F
Berlin	5	-5	F
Bonn	5	-5	S
Brussels	7	-3	Fg
Copenhagen	6	-1	S
Crete	19	13	Sh
Geneva	6	-2	Fg
Larnaca	22	13	S
London	9	2	M
Madrid	20	8	S
Milan	12	2	S
Nice	15	7	S
Oslo	5	-2	F
Paris	12	2	M
Rome	13	4	S
Stockholm	3	-8	S
Tunis	19	12	Sh
Vienna	5	-2	F

Tuesday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	22	12	S
Amsterdam	10	-2	M
Athens	15	9	Sh
Berlin	6	-3	S
Bonn	7	-3	M
Brussels	6	-1	Fg
Copenhagen	8	3	C
Crete	17	11	Sh
Geneva	5	-1	Fg
Larnaca	21	14	Th
London	11	5	C
Madrid	20	7	S
Milan	14	3	S
Nice	17	8	S
Oslo	7	0	C
Paris	12	2	F
Rome	14	4	S
Stockholm	1	-5	Sn
Tunis	21	13	F
Vienna	5	-4	S

C, cloudy; Dr, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; Hz, haze; R, rain; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (previous day's readings)

Around the world

Lunchtime yesterday (previous day in Americas)

Ajaccio	Sh	18	64
Algiers	F	17	63
Amsterdam	F	10	50
Athens	S	20	68
Auckland	S	17	63
B Aires	S	28	82
Bahrain	S	28	82
Bangkok	F	29	84
Barbados	R	25	77
Barcelona	Hz	20	68
Beijing	S	19	66
Belgrade	M	10	50
Berlin	F	6	43
Bermuda	F	23	73
Biarritz	F	14	57
Bombay	S	33	91
Bordeaux	C	11	52
Boston	Dr	7	45
Brisbane	C	26	79
Brussels	Sh	10	50
Budapest	C	9	48
Cairo	F	25	77
Calcutta	F	29	84
Calgary	S	-9	16
Cape Town	S	20	68
Casablanca	F	22	72
Chicago	C	16	61
Copenhagen	R	4	39
Corfu	R	16	61
Dallas	F	24	75
Dublin	S	12	54
Faro	S	23	73
Florence	R	12	54
Frankfurt	F	8	46
Funchal	S	23	73
Geneva	F	10	50
Gibraltar	F	24	75
Helsinki	C	-2	28
Hong Kong	S	25	77
Innsbruck	Sh	7	46
Islamabad	S	25	77
Istanbul	S	15	59
Jersey	F	13	55
Jerusalem	F	17	63
Jo'burg	F	25	77
K. Lumpur	C	33	91
Kingston	F	28	82
Larnaca	F	22	72
Lima	C	20	68
Lisbon	C	23	73
London	C	11	52
Los Angeles	C	18	64
Luxembourg	C	9	46
Madrid	C	20	68
Majorca	S	27	81
Malaga	F	26	79
Malta	F	16	61
Melbourne	C	21	70
Mexico City	Hz	23	73
Miami	S	31	88
Milan	S	19	66
Mombasa	F	29	84
Montreal	F	3	37
Moscow	Sn	-3	27
Munich	Sh	3	37
Nairobi	F	25	77
Naples	R	19	66
Nassau	F	29	84
New Delhi	S	26	79
New Orleans	F	28	82
New York	Sh	14	57
Nice	S	20	68
Oporto	F	20	68
Oslo	C	2	36
Paris	C	11	52
Perth	F	21	70
Port Stanley	S	15	59
Prague	C	3	37
Reykjavik	C	5	41
Rhodes	F	19	66
Riyadh	F	31	88
Rome	C	19	66
Singapore	Th	23	73
Stockholm	Sl	3	37
Strasbourg	F	9	48
Sydney	S	27	81
Tel Aviv	F	25	77
Tenerife	S	25	77
Tokyo	S	18	64
Toronto	C	5	41
Tunis	F	24	75
Vancouver	S	7	45
Venice	C	15	59
Vienna	Sh	7	45
Warsaw	F	5	41
Washington	Dr	16	61
Wellington	C	12	54
Zurich	Sh	8	46

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:
Further snow will affect southern Finland and southern Sweden, otherwise it will be fine and cold. Maximum temperature ranging from 3 or 4 degrees in Denmark to minus 8 degrees in Lapland.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:
A cold north to north-easterly flow will persist, with heavy showers of rain or sleet affecting Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and there will be heavy snowfalls over all high ground. The Low Countries should become mostly dry and bright. Max temps between 4 and 8 degrees.

France:
A dry but rather cold day with plenty of cloud in the east, but prolonged sunshine in the west and south. The mistral in the south-east will last another day. Highs ranging from 7 in Lorraine to 14 in the Midi.

Spain and Portugal:
A few showers are possible in north-east Spain and over the Balearics, otherwise it will be dry with variable cloud and sunshine at times, and much cooler than recently in the north and east with a chill wind from the north-east. Highs between 15 and 21.

Italy:
A cold northerly airflow will bring heavy showers, especially to coasts and hills facing north. Western Italy will have sunny periods. Max temps between 10 and 16.

Greece:
A temporary improvement with sunny periods and just a few showers, but heavy rain will return to northern and western parts later in the day. Max temps ranging from 10 in the northern hills to 20 in the Aegean.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

8.25am News; Weather 8.30 SuperTed. 8.40 Willy Fog 9.05 The Addams Family 9.30 The New Adventures Of Superman 10.15 Live And Kicking. 1.12 Weather 1.15 Grandstand. 6.20 News, Weather. 6.30 Regional News And Weather. 6.35 Dad's Army. 7.05 Jim Davidson's Generation Game 8.00 Noel's House Party. 8.50 The National Lottery Live. 9.05 Casualty. 9.55 News And Sport; Weather. 10.15 FILM: Race Against The Dark. 11.45 Match Of The Day. 12.50 The Stand Up Show. 1.20 FILM: Duel At Diablo. 3.00 Weather 3.05 Close.

BBC 2

9.20am Open University: Brazilian Immigrants — In Search Of Identity. 11.00 Chanakya. 11.40 Video Byte. 11.50 Network East. 12.20 Bollywood Or Bust! 12.50 Film 95 With Barry Norman. 1.20 FILM: Tiger Bay. 3.00 FILM: North West Frontier. 5.05 Pride And Prejudice: From Page To Screen. 5.35 The Oprah Winfrey Show. 6.15 TOTP2 7.00 Pride And Prejudice. 7.55 Life's A Lottery. 8.05 News And Sport; Weather. 8.20 Assignment. 9.05 Dido And Aeneas. 10.00 Performance: After Miss Julie 11.20 Have I Got News For You. 11.50 Later With Jools Holland. 12.55 FILM: The Long Goodbye. 2.50 Close

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

6.00am BBC World News. 6.30 Rainbow. 6.45 Creepy Crawlies. 7.00 The Return Of Dogtanian. 7.25 The Movie Game. 7.50 The Wind In The Willows. 8.10 Blue Peter 8.35 Mike And Angelo. 8.55 Dr Who. 9.20 Building Sights. 9.30 Best Of Kilroy. 10.20 The Best Of Anne And Nick. 12.05 The Best Of Pebble Mill. 12.50 Hot Chefs. 1.00 Top Of The Pops. 1.30 Eastenders 3.00 Mike And Angelo. 3.20 Count Duckula. 3.50 Dr Who. 4.15 Big Break. 4.45 Small Objects Of Desire. 5.05 Prime Weather. 5.10 Castles. 6.00 BBC World News. 6.20 How To Be A Little S'd. 6.30 Strike It Lucky 7.00 Noel's House Party 8.00 Shrinks. 8.55 Prime Weather. 9.00 Bob Monkhouse On The Spot. 9.30 The Vibe. 10.00 The Never-On-A-Sunday Show 10.30 Top Of The Pops. 11.00 The All New Alexi Sayle Show. 11.30 Later With Jools Holland. 12.30 The Bill Omnibus. 1.20 Castles. 2.10 Small Objects Of Desire. 2.30 The Best Of Kilroy. 3.20 Best Of Anne And Nick. 5.10 The Best Of Pebble Mill. 5.10 Best Of Pebble Mill

BBC World

● Eutelsat

6.00am BBC World News 6.20 The Late Show. 7.00 World Headlines. 7.05 Everyman 8.00 World Headlines 8.05 Under The Blue Flag 9.00 World News 9.25 Time Out: The Travel Show. 10.00 World Headlines. 10.05 Horizon. 11.00 World News. 11.20 Britain In View. 12.00 World Headlines. 12.05 The New Map Of Africa 1.00 World News. 1.20 World News Week. 2.00 World News. 2.25 Time Out: Film '95. 3.00 World Headlines. 3.05 Assignment. 4.00 World News 4.25 Time Out: One Foot In The Past. 5.00 World News. 5.25 Time Out The Clothes Show. 6.00 World News. 6.20 World News Week. 7.00 World News 7.20 The Late Show. 8.00 World Headlines. 8.05 Horizon 9.00 World News. 9.25 Time Out: Top Gear 10.00 World News. 10.25 World Business Review. 11.00 World News. 11.25 World Business Review. 12.00 World News 12.25 India Business Report. 1.00 World News. 1.25 World Business Review. 2.00 World News. 2.25 India Business Report. 3.00 World News 3.25 World Business Review. 4.00 World News. 4.25 Time Out: Floyd's American Pie 5.00 World News. 5.20 Britain In View.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.10 Farming Today. 7.50 Prayer for the Day 7.55 Weather. 8.00 Today 9.58 Weather 10.00 News. 10.05 Sport on 4 10.30 Breakaway 11.00 News; Loose Ends. 12.00 News; The Week in Westminster. 12.30 Europhile. 1.00 Money Box. 1.25 The News Quiz. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 News. 2.10 Any Questions? 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 News: Any Answers? 3.30 Saturday Playhouse: Shane 4.45 T Lobsang Rampa — Lama, Mystic and Plumber. 5.00 News: That's History. 5.30 Science Now. 6.00 File on 4. 6.40 Personal Obsessions 6.50 Shipping Forecast 6.55 Weather 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.25 Week Ending 7.50 Offspring 8.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. 8.50 Saturday Night Theatre Hallowe'en Party. 10.20 Music in Mind. 10.50 Ten to Ten. 10.59 Weather. 11.00 News. 11.15 The Heritage Quiz. 11.45 Eight of the Best 12.00 Comparing Notes with Richard Baker 12.30 Any Blokes. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Story: I Used to Live Here. 1.48 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Fourth Estate. 7.45 On Screen. 8.00 World News. 8.15 From The Weeklies. 8.30 People And Politics. 9.00 World News. 9.10 Words Of Faith 9.15 A Jolly Good Show 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business News 10.15 One Step Beyond. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English. Pop Words. 11.45 Letter from America. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Meridian: arts magazine 1.00 World News. 1.05 World Business Review 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Counterpoint. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 World News. 3.05 Sportsworld. 4.00 World News. 4.05 Sportsworld. 5.00 World News. 5.15 Sportsworld continued. 5.30 (MW) News in German. 5.30 Sportworld. 6.00 News Summary. 6.01 Weekend. 6.30 Animals Of Power 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Science In Action. 8.00 World News. 8.05 From Our Own Correspondent. 8.25 Book Choice. 8.30 Counterpoint. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 World News; 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Meridian. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Play of the Week: Puzzles. 12.30 Jazz Now and Then. 12.45 Seven Days. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 The Learning World. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 World News. 2.10 Press Review. 2.15 Soundbyte. 2.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 2.50 Write On. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 The Ed Stewart Show. 4.00 World News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Fourth Estate. 4.45 Science View. 4.50 Waveguide. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Seeing Stars. 5.45 Local Heroes. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 (MW) Weekend. 6.30 In Praise of God.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Tarzan And The Huntress. 8.30 The Man In The Iron Mask. 9.30 The Little Mermaid. 10.30 Jamaica Run 12.00 Little Norse Prince Valiant. 1.30 Class Of '61. 3.15 The Gift Of Love. 5.00 Barnum. 7.00 Freeze Frame. 9.00 Cheyenne Warrior. 11.00 The Distinguished Gentleman. 1.00 Amityville: A New Generation. 2.35 Secrets. 4.10 The Devils.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 Showcase. 9.00 A Perilous Journey. 11.00 Father Hood. 1.00 The Butter Cream Gang 3.00 The Yarn Princess 5.00 The Land That Time Forgot. 7.00 Father Hood. 9.00 Guyver: Dark Hero. 11.00 Philadelphia. 1.05 On Deadly Ground 2.50 Hard Target. 4.30 Men Don't Tell. 6.00 The Land That Time Forgot.

Sky Movies Gold

● Astra

5.00 Pocketful Of Miracles. 7.20 A Woman's Vengeance. 9.00 Meatballs. 11.00 Pale Rider. 1.00 Red Scorpion. 2.45 The Man Who Loved Women. 4.20 Close.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Sport Special 8.30 Mountain Bikes. 9.00 The Big League. 11.00 Boxing. 1.00 Sports Saturday 6.30 Gillette World Sport Special. 7.00 Sports Centre. 7.30 Mountain Bikes. 8.00 Ice Hockey — Live. 9.55 Sports Centre 10.00 Hold The Back Page. 11.00 Bushido. 12.00 A To Z Of Sport. 1.00 Boxing — Live. 5.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Aerobics. 9.30 Slam. 10.00 Football. 12.00 Boxing. 1.00 Martial Arts. 2.00 Aerobics 3.00 Figure Skating. 5.00 Dancing. 6.00 Body Building. 7.00 Trial. 8.00 Truck Racing. 9.00 Pro Wrestling. 10.00 Supercross. 12.00 Boxing. 1.00 Motorsports. 2.00 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

9.00 Postcards From The Hedge. 10.00 Ghoul-Lashed. 12.30 Shoot! 1.00 World Wrestling Federation Mania. 2.00 The Hit Mix. 3.00 Wonder Woman 4.00 Growing Pains. 4.30 Family Ties. 5.00 Kung Fu, The Legend Continues. 6.00 The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles. 7.00 World Wrestling Federation Superstars. 8.00 Robocop. 9.00 VR.5. 10.00 Cops. 10.30 The Serial Killers. 11.00 Dream On. 11.30 Tales From The Crypt. 12.00 The Movie Show. 12.30 Forever Knight. 2.00 Saturday Night Live. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Lassie. 8.25 Going For Gold 8.50 Warship. 9.50 Secret Army 10.55 Neighbours Omnibus 1.00 Elvis: The Movie 4.05 EastEnders Omnibus. 6.50 Till Death Us Do Part. 7.30 Till Death Us Do Part. 8.05 Cowboys. 8.35 Bread. 9.10 The Bill Originals. 10.15 The Young Ones. 11.00 Film: Woman In Red. 12.35 In Concert — The Alma Gala. 1.40 The Album Show. 2.45 Bless This House. 3.10 Shopping At Night.

NBC Super Channel

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.00 The McLaughlin Group. 7.30 Hello Austria, Hello Vienna. 8.00 ITN World News. 8.30 Europa Journal. 9.00 Cyberschool. 10.00 Ushuaia. 11.00 Super Shop. 12.00 Wine Express. 12.30 Great Houses Of The World. 1.00 Videofashion! 1.30 Talkin Blues. 2.00 Australian Cycling 3.00 Golf. 4.00 Kent Tour Of Cina 5.00 Ice Skating. 6.00 News. 6.30 Air Combat. 7.30 Notre Dame College Football. 11.00 NBC Super Sports. 12.00 Late Night With Conan O'brien. 1.00 Talkin' Blues 1.30 Tonight Show With Jay Leno. 2.30 Late Night With Conan O'Brien. 3.30 Talkin' Blues. 4.00 Rivera Live. 5.00 Business View. 5.30 NBC News. 6.00 Weekly Business. 6.30 NBC News.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.30 Time Travellers. 7.00 Time Travellers. 7.30 Time Travellers. 8.00 Time Travellers. 8.30 Time Travellers. 9.00 Guy Fawkes. 10.00 Guy Fawkes. 10.30 Flight Deck. 11.00 Howloween. 11.30 Howloween. 12.00 Realm Of Darkness. 1.00 Close

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

8.30am Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories. 9.15 Discovering Eve. 9.30 Breakfast With Frost. 10.30 First Light. 11.00 See Hear! 11.30 Suenos — World Spanish. 11.45 This Multimedia Business. 12.00 The 11th Hour. 1.00 CountryFile. 1.30 News: On The Record. 2.30 EastEnders. 3.50 FILM: Young Indiana Jones And The Mystery Of The Blues. 5.15 The Bookworm. 5.45 The Clothes Show 6.10 Lifeline. 6.20 The Great Antiques Hunt. 7.00 News; Weather. 7.20 Regional News. 7.25 Songs Of Praise. 8.00 Last Of The Summer Wine. 8.30 The Showstoppers. 9.20 Children In Need: The Big Charity! 9.30 Keeping Up Appearances. 10.00 Final Cut. 10.50 News, Weather. 11.05 In Search Of Happiness. 11.45 Other Worlds. 12.35 FILM: Baja Oklahoma. 2.15 Weather. 2.20 Close.

BBC 2

8.20am The Adventures Of Skippy. 8.45 Playdays. 9.05 Casper Classics. 9.20 Mortimer And Arabel. 9.35 Jackanory: Midnight Feast. 9.50 Bitsa. 10.05 The Animals Of Farthing Wood. 10.30 Skeleton Warriors. 10.55 Travel Bug. 11.20 Grange Hill. 11.50 The Little Vampire. 12.15 Growing Up Wild. 12.40 Star Trek. 1.30 The Sunday Show. 2.15 The O Zone. 2.30 Regional Programmes. 3.00 World Cup Rugby League 95. 4.40 Tennis. 6.10 Rugby Special. 7.10 Trials Of Life. 8.00 On The Road Again. 8.30 Timewatch. 9.20 The Money Programme. 10.00 Cinema Europe — The Other Hollywood. 11.00 FILM: Running On Empty. 12.50 FILM: Sweetie. 2.35 Close. 3.00 The Learning Zone.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

6.00am BBC World News. 6.30 Rainbow. 6.45 Melvin And Maureen's Music-A-Grams. 7.00 Dodger, Bonzo And The Rest. 7.25 Count Duckula. 7.50 The All Electric Amusement Arcade. 8.15 Blue Peter. 8.40 Wild And Crazy Kids. 9.05 Dr Who. 9.30 Best Of Kilroy. 10.20 Best Of Anne And Nick. 12.05 The Best Of Pebble Mill 12.50 Prime Weather. 12.55 Antiques Roadshow. 1.00 The Bill. 2.30 Castles. 3.25 The Return Of Dogtanian. 3.50 Dr Who. 4.20 Antiques Roadshow. 5.05 The World At War. 6.00 BBC World News. 6.30 Next Of Kin. 7.00 999. 7.55 Prime Weather. 8.00 A Question Of Guilt. 9.35 Hollywood. 10.30 Songs Of Praise. 11.05 The Vibe. 11.35 The Never On A Sunday Show. 12.05 Top Of The Pops. 12.35 Eastenders Omnibus. 2.00 Big Break. 2.30 Best Of Kilroy. 3.20 The Best Of Anne And Nick. 5.10 The Best Of Pebble Mill. 5.55 Prime Weather.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

6.00am News. 6.25 India Business Report. 7.00 News. 7.20 News Week. 8.00 Headlines. 8.05 Assignment. 9.00 News. 9.25 The Clothes Show. 10.00 Headlines. 10.05 Everyman 11.00 News. 11.20 The Late Show 12.00 Headlines. 12.05 Under The Blue Flag. 1.00 Headlines. 1.05 Breakfast With Frost. 2.00 News. 2.25 Top Gear. 3.00 Headlines. 3.05 Horizon. 4.00 News. 4.25 The Travel Show. 5.00 News. 5.25 Floyd's American Pie. 6.00 News. 6.20 On The Record. 7.00 News. 7.20 Britain In View. 8.00 Headlines. 8.05 TV Africa. 9.00 News. 9.25 One Foot In The Past. 10.00 World Report. 11.00 World News. 11.25 World Business Report. 12.00 News. 12.25 The Money Programme. 1.00 World News. 1.25 World Business Report. 2.00 News. 2.25 The Money Programme. News. 3.25 Business Report. 4.00 World News. 4.25 Tomorrow's World. 5.00 Newsday.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.10 Something Understood. 7.55 Weather. 8.00 News. 8.10 Sunday Papers. 8.15 On Your Farm. 8.40 Sunday. 9.50 The Week's Good Cause. 9.55 Weather. 10.00 News. 10.10 Sunday Papers. 10.15 Letter from America. 10.30 Morning Service. 11.15 The Archers 12.15 Mediumwave. 12.45 Four Corners. 1.15 Desert Island Discs. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 The World This Weekend. 2.56 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Gardeners' Question Time. 3.30 Classic Serial: The Last of the Mohicans. 4.30 Pick of the Week. 5.15 Analysis. 6.00 News: Class Act. 6.30 Poetry Please! 6.50 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.15 Feedback. 7.30 In Business. 8.00 Little Women. 8.30 Rebel, Rebel. 9.00 (FM) The Natural History Programme. 9.00 (LW) Open University. 9.30 (FM) That's History. 10.00 (FM) UK plc. 10.30 (FM) Costing the Earth. 11.00 News. 11.15 All In the Mind. 11.45 A Week in the Life 12.15 In Committee. 12.45 Seeds of Faith. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Story. 1.48 Shipping. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Jazz For The Asking. 8.00 World News. 8.15 Global Concerns. 8.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 8.50 Write On 9.00 World News. 9.10 Words of Faith. 9.15 John Keats. Bright Star of Romanticism. 10.00 World News 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 In Praise of God. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English. 11.45 Seeing Stars. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Jazz For The Asking. 1.00 World News & Business Brief. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Anything Goes. 2.00 Newshour 3.00 News Summary 3.01 A Jolly Good Show. 3.45 Letter From America. 4.00 News Summary. 4.05 Sports Roundup. 4.15 John Keats: Bright Star of Romanticism. 5.00 World News. 5.15 Fourth Estate. 5.30 (MW) News in German. 5.30 BBC English. 5.45 (MW) News in German. 5.45 Britain Today. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 Soundbyte. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Play Of The Week: Puzzles. 8.30 The Ed Stewart Show. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Brief. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 One Step Beyond. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Letter From America. 11.45 Sports Roundup 12.00 World News. 12.10 VoiceBox. 12.15 The Vintage Chart Show. 12.45 Waveguide. 12.55 Book Choice. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Local Heroes. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 World News. 2.10 Press Review 2.15 Animals Of Power. 2.30 Anything Goes. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 Composer of the Month. 4.00 World News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Jazz For The Asking. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Off The Shelf: The Endless Knot. 5.30 (MW) Europe Today. 5.45 Animals Of Power. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 (MW) Europe Today. 6.30 Andy Kershaw's World of Music.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Tarzan's Magic Fountain. 8.30 The New Adventures Of Oliver Twist. 10.15 Aladdin. 11.15 Honey, I Blew Up The Kid. 1.00 Remote. 3.00 Year Of The Comet. 5.00 Majority Rule. 7.00 Honey, I Blew Up The Kid. 9.00 The Three Musketeers. 11.00 Striking Distance. 12.45 Solar Crisis. 2.40 Spellbinder. 4.20 Twister.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.10 Showcase. 9.00 Man Of La Mancha. 11.15 Legend Of The White Horse. 1.00 The Perfectionist. 3.00 Morons From Outer Space. 5.00 Young Ivanhoe. 7.00 Born Yesterday. 9.00 Betrayed By Love. 11.00 Witness To The Execution. 12.35 The Movie Show. 1.05 Bad Dreams. 2.30 Bruce Lee: Curse Of The Dragon. 4.00 In The Company Of Darkness. 5.30 Morons From Outer Space.

Sky Movies Gold

● Astra

1.00 The Yellow Rolls Royce. 3.00 Battle Of The Bulge. 5.30 Three Godfathers. 7.30 Clash Of The Titans. 9.20 Rich Kids. 11.00 The Gauntlet. 12.55 Frances. 3.15 The Phantom Of Liberty. 5.00 Close.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Rugby Union. 10.00 Boxing. 12.00 A-Z of Sport. 12.30 Sport Special. 1.00 Goals On Sunday. 2.30 Watersports. 3.30 Soccer Magazine 4.00 Everton v Blackburn Rovers 8.00 Boxing. 9.00 NFL — Live. 1.00 Football Special. 4.00 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Aerobics. 9.30 Triathlon. 11.00 Offroad. 12.00 Supercross. 1.00 Sumo. 3.00 Figure Skating. 5.00 Dancing. 6.00 Aerobics. 7.00 Strength. 8.00 Body Building. 9.00 Aerobics. 10.00 Supercross. 12.00 Boxing. 1.30 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

8.00 Hour Of Power. 9.00 Ghoul-Lashed. 11.30 Shoot! 12.00 Postcards From The Hedge. 2.00 The Hit Mix. 3.00 Dukes Of Hazard. 4.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 5.00 World Wrestling Federation Action Zone. 6.00 Great Escapes. 6.30 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. 7.00 The Simpsons. 7.30 The Simpsons. 8.00 Beverly Hills 90210. 9.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 10.00 Highlander. 11.00 Renegade. 12.00 LA Law. 1.00 Entertainment Tonight. 1.50 Sibs. 2.20 Comic Strip Live. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Lassie. 8.25 Going For Gold 8.50 Spring And Autumn. 9.15 And Mother Makes Five. 9.45 Bless This House. 10.15 Dr Who. 1.00 The Dawson Watch. 1.30 It Ain't Half Hot, Mum. 2.00 Film: Birth Of The Beatles. 3.55 The Bill 6.10 Bergerac. 7.20 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em. 8.00 The Paul Daniels Magic Show. 9.00 Howards' Way 10.00 Minder. 11.05 Film. Great Balls Of Fire! 1.05 Public Eye. 2.05 Warship. 3.00 Shopping.

NBC Super Channel

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.00 Strictly Business. 7.30 Winners 8.00 News. 8.30 Business View. 9.00 Air Combat. 10.00 Frost's Century. 11.00 Super Shop. 12.00 The McLaughlin Group. 12.30 Europe 2000. 1.00 Executive Lifestyles. 1.30 Talkin' Jazz. 2.00 Formula One Documentary. 2.30 Tennis Legends. 3.00 Pro Superbikes. 3.30 X-kulture. 4.00 Australian Cycle Classic. 5.00 Meet The Press. 6.00 News. 6.30 Videofashion! 7.00 Wine Express. 7.30 Selina Scott Show. 8.30 NBC News Magazine. 9.30 News. 10.00 Tonight Show. 11.00 Anderson Consulting. 12.00 Conan O'Brien. 1.00 Talkin' Jazz. 1.30 Jay Leno. 2.30 Conan O'brien. 3.30 Talkin' Jazz. 4.00 Rivera Live. 5.00 The McLaughlin Group. 5.30 NBC News. 6.00 ITN World News. 6.15 NBC News Magazine. 6.30 Steals And Deals. 7.00 Close.

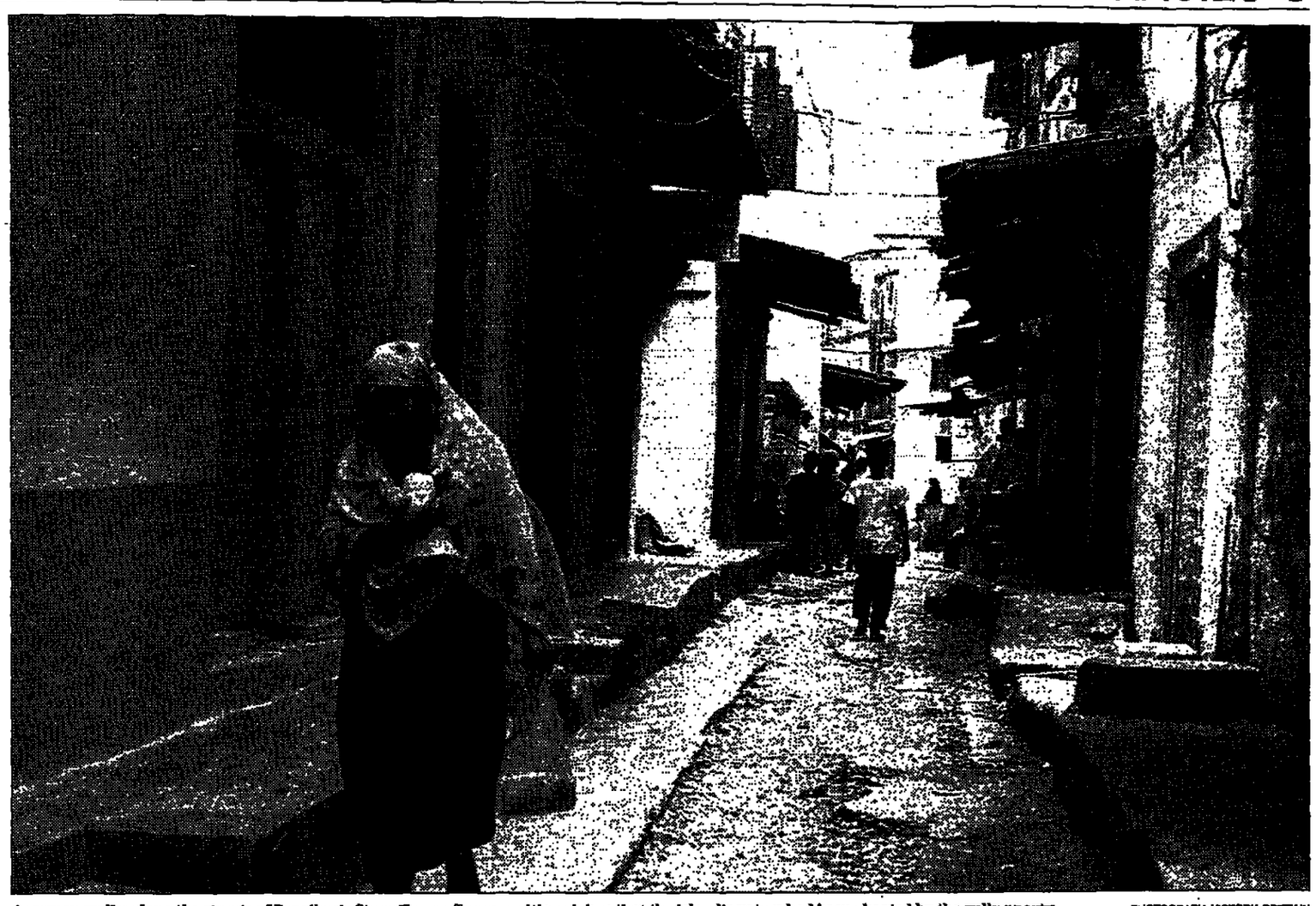
Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Battle Stations. 6.00 Secret Weapons. 6.30 Wars In Peace. 7.00 Top Guns 7.30 State of Alert. 8.00 Fields Of Armour. 8.30 Driving Passions. 9.00 Deadly Australians. 9.30 Voyager. 10.00 Wonders Of Weather. 10.30 Ultra Science. 11.00 Science Detectives. 11.30 Guy Fawkes Night. 1.00 Close.

With the end of the cold war Africa appeared to be heading for a new era of multi-party politics with the enthusiastic backing of the West. But five years on, as many of the continent's leaders prepare for next week's Commonwealth summit in New Zealand, de facto one-party rule remains rampant and rulers have learnt that donor countries are not interested in much more than a facade of democracy so long as economic reforms are on track.

Victoria Brittain reports on the recent flawed general elections in Zanzibar, while, below, **Chris McGreal** looks at how Africa's old autocrats have adapted to changes in international political fashion.



A woman walks along the streets of Zanzibar's Stone Town after opposition claims that the island's voters had been cheated by the ruling party PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA BRITTAIN

Zanzibar's ballot hopes betrayed

LONG lines of country women wrapped in bright cloths and with their heads covered formed in the school courtyard just after dawn, more than an hour before the polls opened for Zanzibar's first multi-party elections.

The separate male queues grew more slowly with groups of men walking through the coconut plantations and down the pot-holed dirt road.

All day and long into the night the queues inched forward as the first rains of the season poured down and red mud rose ankle deep. Voters fetched paraffin lamps as darkness fell. Election officials, after a day without food or a break, sat on the concrete floor with bats swooping about their heads counting ballots by flickering light until dawn.

The people's passion for this election, held at the end of last month, was so strong that 98 per cent of Zanzibaris on the two islands of Ungunja and Pemba voted in the first round for president of Zanzibar, for the islands' assembly, and for local councillors.

But their passion was wasted, their faith squandered. An authoritarian and incompetent state turned the exercise into bitter farce. It is a story repeated across Africa, from Kenya and Nigeria to Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Equatorial Guinea. It is the second phase of a betrayal of popular hopes.

The morning after the vote four days of tension began with shops closed, no fishing boats at sea. The women stayed home. In the narrow streets of the old Moorish Stone Town, supporters of the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) stood all day, radios in hand, recycling early results of the assembly vote which put them neck-and-neck with the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM).

On successive days first CUF and then CCM denounced the elections as "not free and fair". CUF demanded a recount of all ballots cast in the presidential election; CCM called for the whole election to be nullified.

The Organisation of African Unity observer team declared the elections to have been "free and transparent", while the United Nations and Commonwealth teams kept quiet. The Canadian technical assistant to the Zanzibar Electoral Commission became invisible, and heavyweights from the donor community flew in from Dar es Salaam.

The UN team leader proposed to the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC) that together they should re-examine all the figures. "They turned the offer down," said Ambassador Kam Karanko, a Finn with long experience in Tanzania. "We could have done it in 24 hours," he said.

In four out of five constituencies where the UN was able to compare its figures with ZEC's, there were discrepancies. In the most serious case, Mlandege constituency, the UN figures for the presidential election agreed with those of the assistant returning officer and monitors from the independent local group, Zemog, giving CCM 2,775 and CUF 2,792. ZEC, however, announced a CCM win with 3,248 votes to CUF's 2,319.

"This seriously calls in question the validity of the whole count of ZEC," according to Ambassador Karanko.

On the main street, as discontent grew, crowds of CCM and CUF youths traded insults from rival corners. On the mainland and in the Zanzibari diaspora from the Gulf to Europe parties prematurely celebrated the defeat of the ruling party.

In the mid-afternoon of the fourth day ZEC announced that CCM's Salmin Amour Juma, the incumbent president, had won with 165,271 votes over CUF's Seif Sherif Hamad's 163,706. There were 4,000 spoiled ballots.

CCM T-shirts and caps sprouted from trucks, and processions of cars, taxis and motorbikes roared all over the main island of Ungunja with their young male passengers waving tree branches and cheering the ruling party.

> Not since the Zanzibar revolution has there been such fear of instability

The mood turned ugly as they screamed "go home" in districts where people from Pemba live. (Pemba voted heavily for CUF.) The next day Dr Amour was sworn in again as president.

"After the announcement all files were closed," aid Ambassador Karanko. "It is a closed chapter. No reconciliation of the figures is possible, ZEC refused to meet Zemog or any other monitoring group," said Dr Haroub Othman, chief co-ordinator of Zemog, an independent group of 140 observers set up by the Zanzibar Legal Services Centre.

Zemog's report highlighted a pattern of handicaps for the opposition based on the ruling party's failure to dissociate itself from the state. From registration, through the campaign, to the counting, including discrepancies between the numbers of voters registered and of votes cast, and the refusal to announce the presidential vote by constituencies, the verdict was "bad".

Calls by former president Julius Nyerere, and from Zemog, for a government of national unity to reflect the two parties' virtually equal support were ignored. Instead Dr Amour boosted his majority of two seats in the Zanzibar parliament by choosing nine CCM hardliners as the nominated MPs the constitution provides for.

Cynicism about democracy, multi-party politics, and an international community which has turned election monitoring into a charade, has grown as quickly in Tanzania in recent days as it did in Uganda in 1980 when the military junta stole the election for Milton Obote under the nose of Commonwealth observers. Likewise in Angola in 1992 when the UN-supervised elections were effectively overturned by Unita's return to war.

Post-colonial Africa found stability — at a price — in its one-party states. But across the continent, this phase of history is ending, with even the best of the parties degraded by corruption, nepotism, misuse of the security services and distancing from the people. The new phase, in which the outsiders' catchwords are "democracy" and "good governance" is fragile and illusory. It risks breaking down into instability or authoritarianism, as Tanzania illustrates.

Last month's debacle has deepened the splits between Zanzibar and the mainland, and between Zanzibar's two islands. It has also encouraged a sense of grievance which could be easily translated into Islamic extremism.

Not since the Zanzibar revolution of 30 years ago, when 10,000 people died, has there been such fear of instability. Tanzania was the stable backbone of a region which has suffered the refugee consequences of Amin's Uganda, and of waves of ethnic killings in Rwanda and Burundi. Amid the tensions and fears which stalk a region including Kenya, northern Uganda and southern Sudan, a stable Tanzania will be badly missed.

Martin Woollacott, Outlook page 14

Tanzanian soldiers follow election results by radio during a parade in Dar es Salaam PHOTOGRAPH: RICARDO MAZALAN

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Strongmen win West's vote of confidence

FEW people believe the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa was dispatched to death row in Nigeria this week because he really organised the murders of four rival Ogoni leaders. The evidence was weak and the tribunal was far from intent on seeking justice.

Perhaps Nigeria's military rulers wanted rid of him because his campaign against Shell Oil deprived them of a few more million pounds to plunder. But it is just as likely they saw in Ken Saro-Wiwa a much greater threat. His mobilisation of the Ogoni people offered an unsettling example of organised defiance to Nigeria's power structure.

Some other African leaders must be grateful to General Sani Abacha's heavy-handed repression for diverting attention from their own efforts to thwart challenges to their power.

Like Nigeria's dictator, many of those who will gather for next week's Commonwealth summit still assure the world that they are committed to democratic reform. Yet five years after the end of the cold war was to have ushered in a new wave of freedom to Africa, democracy is on the retreat despite some successes.

South Africa's transition is a lesson for all. But seen from some of Africa's presidential palaces, the view is of a multi-party South Africa dominated by single party unlikely to be challenged in the foreseeable future. It is an example not a few leaders are trying to follow.

There are still multi-party systems aplenty. Political parties, independent newspapers and other seedlings of the promised freedom have sprouted across the continent. Elections abound. But all too often they are not signs that democratic concepts, such as freedom to criticise, are taking root. Instead they are merely a price Africa's old autocrats can afford in an effort to ward off foreign criticism and keep the aid flowing. And they have learnt that the West is not interested in much more than a facade of democracy so long as economic reforms are on track.

Kenya was once a one-party state. Zimbabwe never quite got there. But from the way their respective presidents behave, they might as well be.

Three years ago President Daniel arap Moi's rule in Kenya looked close to collapse. He had been forced into an election by a freeze on Western aid. So he gave Kenyans a vote and a multitude of parties to choose from. Then he divided an already fragmented opposition, and turned the country against itself with the callous manipulation of ethnic rivalries. Every death sponsored by Mr Moi was touted as evidence that democracy does not work.

	GDP per capita $	Population	% in absolute poverty	Public spending on health as % of gdp
Tanzania	120	26m	58	3.2
Nigeria	350	88m	40	1.2
Kenya	340	22m	52	2.7
Zambia	420	8m	64	2.2
Zimbabwe	670	11m	NA	3.2

Source. Economic Commission for Africa.

When he won, with less than half the popular vote, the Kenyan president took it as endorsement to carry on as before. Graft is still rife. The opposition is harassed. Some parties are banned. Opponents are jailed. Constituencies are being gerrymandered ready for the next presidential election in two years.

Some foreign aid is frozen but only because the crackdown is a bit too blatant for donor tastes. And there's no reason to believe that Mr Moi's groundwork will not bring him victory again.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe opposition is effectively neutralised and President Robert Mugabe is crafting a *de facto* one-party state five years after he was forced to abandon his plan to write it in to the constitution.

Even those countries hailed as exemplars have stumbled. Uganda remains a no-party state, lauded for its strict adherence to the IMF blueprint rather than any democratic pretensions.

In Zambia President Frederick Chiluba was elected four years ago after cuts in Western aid helped force former president Kenneth Kaunda to the polls. Mr Chiluba was heralded as the vanguard of a wave of popular reform that the old autocrats would be unable to resist. Today he has joined their club.

Mr Chiluba heads a government widely dismissed as corrupt and at best incompetent. Many in Zambia's democracy movement have quit in disgust. Perhaps the biggest indictment of the government is that its shortcomings have revitalised Mr Kaunda.

President Chiluba plotted to have Mr Kaunda deported as an alien because his parents were born in what is now Malawi. The government was forced to back off but it is still trying to use the issue to prevent Mr Kaunda from running for president again.

The return of Mr Kaunda is also a comment on the dearth of credible opposition leaders. It is a problem not confined to Zambia.

Africa's democrats are divided on the causes but many point the finger at the West. Its enthusiasm for democracy five years ago has waned in favour of ensuring economic reform. So long as African leaders adhere to privatisation and unpopular structural adjustment programmes then it is thought a bit too much to ask them to throw themselves entirely to the mercy of the voters.

If there really was no hope for Hackney Downs, it was hard to explain the tears of the pupils and the angry sense of betrayal among many of their parents which greeted the decision to close it. Why were they so upset if the school was so dreadful? The truth was that Hackney Downs had hope, but realising it was going to be too expensive.

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Yeltsin says his health is 'not too bad'

James Meek in Moscow

PRIME-TIME television resurrected the rule of Boris Yeltsin last night by broadcasting the first pictures of the ailing Russian leader since he was taken to hospital with a heart attack.

Rumours that the president was dead had become more insistent as the information blackout on his condition entered its second week. Yesterday's videotape proved he is still alive and talking.

Mr Yeltsin, dressed in a tracksuit and sitting opposite the prime minister, Victor Chernomyrdin, was shown saying: "Subjectively, I don't feel too bad now." He added that he was meeting doctors twice a day. "Of course, I still have to be brought back to normal health, but I'm not now in any danger," he said.

The pictures were broadcast on the mid-evening news on the ORT channel, the most widely received in Russia. Mr Yeltsin's face was slightly puffy and he slurred his words a little.

But the continuing seriousness of his condition, and doubts about who is really running the country, were highlighted after yesterday's meeting with the prime minister when Mr Chernomyrdin said he had taken partial control of four key ministries.

The departments — defence, security, foreign and interior — normally report directly to Mr Yeltsin, but, under the strict medical regime at the Central Clinical Hospital, he is allowed only brief meetings with aides.

"The president has to be partially relieved of these duties to give him a better chance to recover," said Mr Chernomyrdin.

Despite the uncertainty, confidence was growing yesterday that December's parliamentary elections would take place as planned with the participation of all the big parties, including the popular liberal Yabloko bloc, which was refused registration on a technicality by the central electoral commission.

The Yabloko leader, Grigory Yavlinsky, made his bid for reinstatement in the supreme court yesterday, saying: "What we are defending here is the very possibility of a peaceful transfer of power."

Judges put off a final decision until today, but all the signs point to a decision in Mr Yabloko's favour. Most rejected parties have had their complaints about the commission's chairman, Nikolai Ryabov, upheld.

Leader comment, page 14

Large as life . . . Boris Yeltsin during his televised meeting with the prime minister, Victor Chernomyrdin PHOTOGRAPH: DIMA TANIN

Walesa claws back in polls

Matthew Brzezinski in Warsaw

AS CAMPAIGNING for tomorrow's first round of Poland's presidential elections officially ended yesterday, final opinion polls showed support for President Lech Walesa steadily rising as anti-communist forces begin to rally around him.

The polls showed Mr Walesa narrowly trailing the young leftwing challenger, Aleksander Kwasniewski of the reformed communists. Both men enjoy leads over the remaining 11 candidates, and are widely expected to advance to the deciding round on November 19.

Mr Kwasniewski's campaign headquarters has launched a bitter attack on the president, a move many expected to set the tone for a divisive second round.

"We have reasons to believe that units of the special secret services under the president's control are being used against Aleksander Kwasniewski," claimed Zbigniew Siemiantkowski, an MP of the ruling Democratic Left Alliance, Mr Kwasniewski's party.

Perhaps more damning were allegations by the Left that the most detested man in Poland, Mieczyslaw Wachowski, Mr Walesa's former driver and a close confidant, has not been sacked as the president claims but is secretly running his campaign.

Mr Kwasniewski, aged 41, also spent the remaining days of the campaign dodging allegations. Newspapers with close ties to Mr Walesa disclosed documented reports of alleged financial improprieties by the leftwing candidate and his colleague, the prime minister, Jozef Oleksy.

Mr Kwasniewski's polished reputation was tarnished yesterday when a parliamentary commission dominated by party colleagues refused to release his financial records.

Speaking to a packed final election rally, Mr Kwasniewski said that tomorrow's vote was a choice between "stability and chaos".

Meanwhile, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Poland's foreign minister, said yesterday the Vatican opposes any revision of a 1993 concordat with Poland, which has not been ratified by the ruling coalition on the grounds that it may limit the rights of non-Catholics. Its ratification has become a key election issue.

Shevardnadze trades on voters' hopes for stability

Georgia's leader is accused by his political opponents of kowtowing to Russia. **Andrew Harding** reports from Tbilisi

EDUARD Shevardnadze, Georgia's leader, faces presidential elections this weekend which may reward him for bringing political stability to the country or punish him for economic chaos which has left teachers earning around £3 a month, and most businesses in the hands of the mob.

Mr Shevardnadze's aides, pointing confidently to opinion polls predicting victory, say the only thing that worries them is a low turnout. Almost a million people, about a sixth of the population, have already left the country.

Five candidates are running against Mr Shevardnadze, who won international celebrity status as Mikhail Gorbachev's pro-Western foreign minister, but then returned to his newly independent homeland to take charge after his predecessor was ousted in a bloody coup.

Most opposition votes are likely to go to Dzhumber Patiashvili, aged 56, who like Mr Shevardnadze enjoyed a stint as Communist Party boss in Georgia, and whose populist platform has won him support from a broad mix of disgruntled nationalists and communists.

So far, the swarm of international election monitors who have descended on Georgia's elegantly dilapidated capital, Tbilisi, seem relatively happy with the way the campaigns — one for a new president, and one for a new, stronger parliament — have been handled.

That marks a strong contrast with the abuses which marred Armenia's parliamentary elections earlier this year and which diplomats fear will turn next week's Azerbaijan elections into "a farce".

"Shevardnadze — I guess," nodded Nana Kvarchelia, aged 37, a mother who turned up to hear him speak at Stalin's hometown of Gori.

"Electricity is still a problem. But life is getting better, slowly. I think the worst is over," she said.

Standing on the steps of Joseph Stalin's "cottage" — a wooden building entombed in an austere sandstone prison — Mr Shevardnadze did not seem to mind when speakers made comparisons between him and the Soviet dictator.

"The fact is," he said in an interview, "that for the next four or five years stability in Georgia depends on me."

"Stability" is certainly a valuable commodity in a country which has already lost two large chunks of territory to secessionist fighters, and where, until recently, the sound of gunfire was more common than car horns.

> He has quietly outmanoeuvred the rival paramilitary forces which almost strangled his government

Mr Shevardnadze has set about cultivating it with his own typically ponderous cunning — quietly outmanoeuvring the rival paramilitary forces which almost strangled his government, until a failed assassination attempt two months ago gave him the the excuse to move in for the kill.

The attack, a car bomb which injured Mr Shevardnadze as he was on his way to sign Georgia's new constitution, jolted the authorities and prompted a wave of arrests.

The former security minister, Igor Giorgadze, was accused of masterminding a coup attempt and fled to Moscow where he remains in hiding, managing to evade the Russian police with suspicious ease.

The incident underlined Georgia's uneasy, almost paranoid, relationship with its powerful nothern neighbour, Russia.

As no Georgian will ever forget, it was Russian jets, mercenaries and guns which helped Abkhazian fighters win de facto independence for their Black Sea region in 1993.

"Shevardnadze's policy towards Russia is one of unconditional surrender," complained an MP, Notar Notadze, who feels Mr Shevardnadze has failed to stand up to his former masters. "We could be like the Baltics — independent. Instead we have Russian troops breathing down our necks," he said.

Mr Shevardnadze's decision to join the Commonwealth of Independent States and to allow Russian troops to remain on Georgian territory provoked outrage here. But his chief of staff, Peter Mamradze, said: "We had no choice. It was a matter of life or death for our country. You know what Russia is like."

Some observers fear sparks could fly again soon as Moscow and Tbilisi vie for control of a pipeline carrying oil from the Caspian Sea basin to western markets. Western oilmen in Azerbaijan have promised both countries a share of the spoils, but Georgia is being tipped, in the long-term, as the favourite.

But Mr Shevardnadze seems likely to be back in his office on Monday, running Georgia, albeit with a stronger, and almost certainly more critical, parliament to handle.

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First Lady may be called to testify on 'cover-up'

Republicans smell Whitewater blood

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

REPUBLICANS in the United States were jubilant yesterday after they dealt a double blow to Bill Clinton and made the most serious attack on abortion rights in a generation.

Senate investigators said yesterday they had moved closer to implicating the president's wife, Hillary Clinton, in an alleged cover-up following the mysterious 1993 death of the then White House lawyer Vince Foster — and hinted they might call Mrs Clinton as a star witness.

Under intense interrogation during a fresh round of Whitewater hearings, two aides to Mrs Clinton revealed inconsistencies with previous testimony they had made.

Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the senate banking committee, all but accused the aides of lying. He said the testimony of Susan Thomases, Mrs Clinton's closest confidante, was "beyond belief — it is not credible or believable."

Ms Thomases had claimed that she could not remember a five-and-a-half hour visit to the White House and countless telephone calls made immediately after Foster's death.

Republicans claim that newly-disclosed phone records confirm a flurry of conversations between Ms Thomases, Mrs Clinton's chief of staff Maggie Williams, and Mrs Clinton herself. They believe the women were working together to keep police from searching Foster's office — where sensitive Whitewater land-deal files were stored.

Ms Williams was also forced to retract her claim that she had not spoken to Ms Thomases that night. Telephone records show the women did speak shortly after 1am — after Ms Williams had entered Foster's office.

The new evidence emerged as Republicans sought to capitalise on the latest blunder by Mr Clinton, who admitted to a conservative columnist that he had behaved "like a prime minister, not a president" and had failed to read the rightward drift in the US.

Mr Clinton phoned the writer Ben Wattenberg and frankly condemned his own record. He conceded that, by 1994, he had "lost the language" of the centrist New Democrat and had become "a cardboard cut-out of myself".

Last month, Mr Clinton delighted Republicans by announcing he had raised taxes "too much" in his 1993 budget. At the time he had staked his presidency on the move.

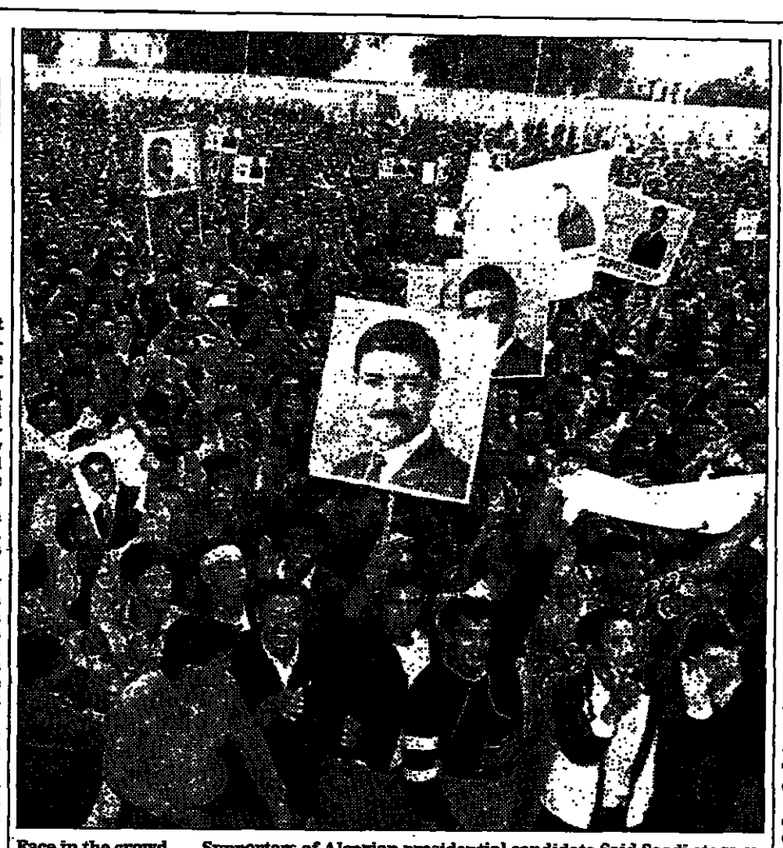
Republicans hope to maintain the momentum next Tuesday, when the Senate debates this week's historic vote by the House of Representatives to ban a rare, late-term abortion procedure and jail doctors who perform it. Doctors resort to the method only rarely in cases of severe foetal abnormality or when the mother's life is endangered.

The bill is likely to gain quick passage in the Senate, although White House aides said Mr Clinton would veto it.

Republicans claimed they were now on the road to a comprehensive ban on abortion. The vote marked the first time Congress had moved to outlaw a specific abortion procedure since the supreme court's landmark Roe v Wade decision in 1973.

In a remarkable shift, 73 Democrats crossed sides to vote with the Republicans.

Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, called the vote "the most devastating and appalling attack on a woman's freedom to choose in the history of the House."



Face in the crowd . . . Supporters of Algerian presidential candidate Said Saadi stage an election rally in Tizziouzou stadium. France yesterday told Algerian residents they would not have six days to vote, as promised by Algiers. Instead they must cast their ballot on November 11 and 12 or on election day itself, November 16 PHOTOGRAPH: LAURENT SAZY

Morocco leads world in export of cannabis

Leonard Doyle

MOROCCO has become the world's leading cannabis exporter and income from an officially sanctioned drugs trade is now its main source of foreign exchange, says a secret report to the European Union.

The respected Paris-based Geopolitical Drug Watch claims that the drug trade is protected and even managed by people close to King Hassan — among them close relatives, former government ministers, businessmen, mayors and MPs.

It concludes that Morocco has overtaken Pakistan and Afghanistan as the main source of cannabis and has become the main supplier to the European drugs market. There has been a 10-fold increase in cannabis cultivation in Morocco in 10 years, the organisation claims, and the country has the capacity to export more than 1,000 tons annually.

Corruption at every level of government has led the authorities to turn a blind eye to smuggling and cultivation. The result is that Morocco is also becoming an important route for heroin, cocaine and other hard drugs destined for Europe.

A spokesman for Geopolitical Drug Watch said the report's findings cast doubt on complaints that drug smuggling from the Netherlands and the EU's Schengen open borders accord are behind increased drug seizures in EU member states. The French daily, Le Monde, which published extracts from a leaked copy of the report yesterday, said that Moroccan drug production was concentrated in the mountainous Rif region in the north and that more than 200,000 farmers produce cannabis for the European market.

The "revenue from cannabis derivatives [hashish] are the country's main source of income," the report concludes.

At home with the cannabis growers, page 15

British Mid East legacy lingers on

Derek Brown in Jerusalem on how colonialism shaped a region struggling with painful change

THE Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, tomorrow begins a five-day tour of six and a half Middle Eastern countries, all invented, shaped or once occupied by Britain.

The visit will not cause much of a stir. In Amman, Mr Rifkind will be welcomed warmly by King Hussein, the most loyal of kings. In financially-strapped Saudi Arabia, there will be no more than polite expressions of interest in buying more Tornado jets. Lebanon will be a fleeting affair. In Syria he will meet President Hafez Assad, whose party-pooping views on the Middle East peace process will no doubt be heard with interest later by the Israelis. When he gets to Gaza, Mr Rifkind may announce another dribble of aid for the half-country of Palestine. In Cairo, his last port of call, there will be praise for Egypt's peacemaking role.

The region remains important to Britain. Last year, following the consistent pattern of the past three years, the balance of trade with the countries on Mr Rifkind's itinerary was running at two-to-one, with Britain netting nearly £1,700 million.

But the opposite is not true. One of the greater ironies of the post-imperial era is that Britain is not very important any more, in a region which could almost merit a label of origin Made in Britain.

In 1921 Winston Churchill was colonial secretary, and the dawn was rising on what the historian, Elizabeth Monroe, used as the title of her definitive work, Britain's Moment in the Middle East.

The colonial plotters slapped down their own new frontiers on the cultural, historical and religious map of the region. Astonishing deals were done and colossal promises made: the French were to have Syria and Lebanon; the Jews were to have a national home in Palestine; the princes of Arabia were to have a kingdom. Then, after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, came the reckoning.

Transjordan (now the kingdom of Jordan) was carved away from the British mandated territory of Palestine, the better to fit Churchill's imperial schemes. Iraq was compiled from eastern remnants of the crumpled Ottoman empire. Kurds, Sunni Muslims and Shias were lumped together in a client kingdom rich in oil.

The proud prince of Najd (now Saudi Arabia), was peremptorily ordered to give a chunk of his land to the new Iraq and compensated with a large slice of Kuwait. Faisal, the extremely temporary Arab king of Syria, was chased out of Damascus by the French — who had also snapped up Lebanon in the post-Ottoman fire sale — and imposed on Iraq as a compensation prize. His brother, Abdullah, got Transjordan.

Untroubled by any serious rivals, the British were able to carry on in much the same high-handed way, imposing and deposing regimes, installing garrisons, putting down rebellions, carving out oil

Churchill: maps drawn to fit his imperial schemes

concessions, for the next 20 years.

It has become a commonplace to say that the second world war shattered the empire and that the Suez campaign of 1956 finally swept aside the illusion that Britain was still a great power. The irony is that it was here, where notions of empire had their shortest run and left so little mark in terms of political culture, that the British influence lingered longest.

In Israel and the occupied territories, it is tempting to say that little remains of the British mandate, which lasted less than 30 years. Yet the place itself, the vortex of Middle East conflict, was moulded by the British. The frontiers were cynically hacked from historical reality by the 1916 Anglo-French Sykes-Picot pact, the League of Nations and the empire-builder, W. S. Churchill. The demographic balance was irrevocably altered by the Balfour Declaration and subsequent Jewish immigration.

Next week Mr Rifkind will make his way through a region struggling to change and finding it painful. He will doubtless congratulate the leading players in the peace game for their courage in breaking with the past. It may not be fanciful to suggest that what the Middle East is truly trying to escape is the legacy of British manipulation.

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Unofficial claims by Paris detectives put pressure on Government

Mastermind of French bombings 'is in London'

Paul Webster in Paris and Richard Norton-Taylor

AN ALGERIAN living in London was yesterday named by French police sources as a key figure behind the three-month bombing campaign which has killed seven people and injured nearly 200 in France.

The allegation that Abou Fares — the pseudonymous editor of a clandestine news bulletin, al-Ansar, published in west London — was behind the attacks was made in the French newspaper Le Monde. It said detectives had established links between Mr Fares and an alleged terrorist leader, Boualem Bensaid, arrested in Paris on Wednesday.

Media reports said Mr Bensaid's fingerprints matched those found on the fragments of at least one of the bombs.

In Britain, security sources insisted that MI5 and the Special Branch were liaising closely with their French counterparts. But the press leak has embarrassed the British government and may have been intended to. Only last Tuesday, the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, denied that London had become a haven for Islamic guerrillas.

France has repeatedly accused al-Ansar of inciting Islamic extremists to carry out terrorist activities. A recent issue of the Arabic newspaper praised past attacks in Algeria. Security sources in Whitehall responded yesterday by saying they relied on the French authorities to provide sufficient information for extradition.

There was no official public confirmation of the allegation against Mr Fares but detectives in Paris claimed Mr Bensaid had telephoned him before ordering a Lille terrorist unit to prime a bomb to be set off in the northern city on Sunday. Police seized the bomb in a raid on Thursday. Mr Fares was unofficially described as being "responsible for giving orders".

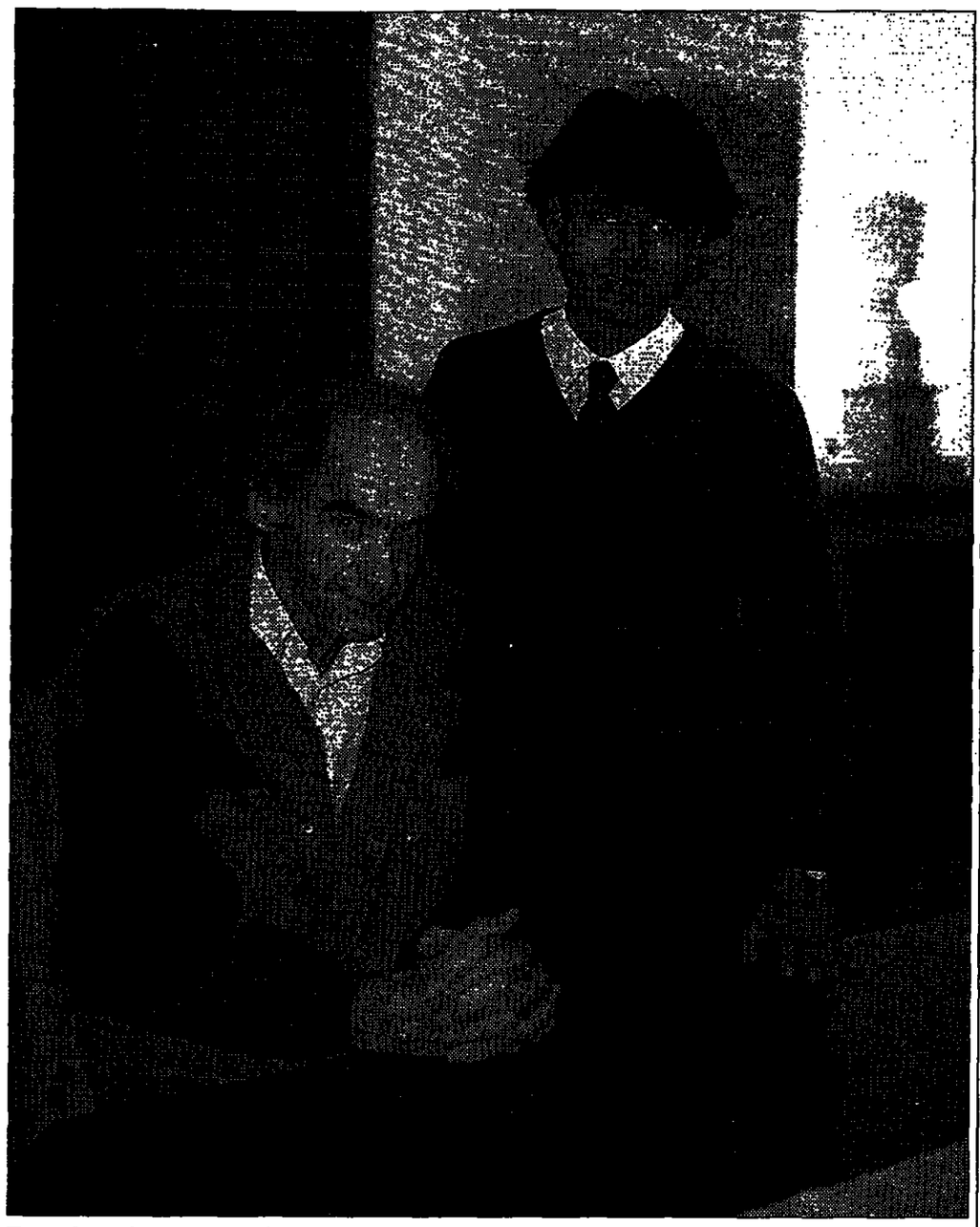
Mr Fares's name was also said to be contained in a notebook carried by Khaled Kelkal, who was shot dead near Lyon last month after being linked with an attempt to blow up a high-speed train on the Lyon-Paris line.

If the police allegation that Mr Fares also co-ordinated terror units in Belgium and Italy is true, it seems likely that President Jacques Chirac would have informed John Major during the British-French summit last weekend that elements of Algeria's hardline Armed Islamic Group (GIA) were operating against France from Britain.

Mr Fares was said by detectives to be legally resident in London, one of the main propaganda bases for the GIA, which opposes the Algerian junta and is determined to upset the country's presidential election on November 16.

Mr Bensaid, arrested with nine other Algerians, two of whom were allegedly operating a bomb factory in Lille, was tracked down by a classic police operation, French detectives said. Using information obtained after the arrest of Khaled Kelkal's accomplices, the Algerian was traced to a Paris flat.

Police tapped all the public telephone boxes in the area where Mr Bensaid lived and listened when he made calls to London, Lyon and Lille.



Heir to the castle . . . Jayaram Khadka with Richard Morley, who is fulfilling a death-bed pledge to look after the youth. Mr Morley wants Jayaram to inherit his estate, including Clearwell Castle (below) but the youth faces deportation

Tycoon fights threat to deport 'son'

Home Office intervenes in saga of rescued Nepalese boy

John Mullin

A WIDOWED millionaire is threatening to quit Britain if the Home Office deports a youth aged 19 he regards as his son. He is fulfilling a promise to the Nepalese youth's father in looking after him, and has bequeathed him his fortune.

Richard Morley, aged 41, who owns the 18th century Clearwell Castle in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, says Jayaram Khadka, who is privately educated, has not cost British taxpayers a penny. He accuses the Home Office of racism and is scouting for a new home for both of them in South America.

Mr Morley, a survival training expert with the navy, suffered a collapsed lung at 17,000ft while climbing in the Himalayas 10 years ago. He would have died but for the guide with his group, who ran down the Annapurna mountains for three days and raised the alarm.

After convalescing, Mr Morley sought out his saviour. Basu Khadka, who had a serious heart condition, refused any offer of money but asked Mr Morley to take care of his son in the event of his death.

Mr Morley said yesterday: "A man saves your life, you owe him something. I agreed without question."

Mr Morley and Mr Khadka kept in touch until 1990, when the correspondence dried up.

Mr Morley, who has owned the castle for five years, went to the Himalayas and discovered that Mr Khadka had died of a heart attack. He set about finding Jayaram. It took him more than a month.

"He was in rags and destitute, living on the floor of a restaurant. He was working as a goat shepherd and down a mine."

Mr Morley, whose wife was to die two years later, brought him back. Jayaram has had a private tutor and has studied English literature, Greek philosophy, fine arts and the great classical works, Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky.

He has been unable to adopt the youth, whom he calls his son. But with no other children, Mr Morley said last night he wants Jayaram to inherit the castle, a flat in Bloomsbury, house in Margate, antiques, and a 5,000-book academic library.

But there is a problem. Mr Morley, who is regarded as a reclusive figure locally, brought Jayaram into Britain on a visitor's visa, declaring he was aged 18. In fact, he was aged 14. "We realised he was much younger than we supposed the first time he had a bath," Mr Morley said.

The Home Office rejected an application in May 1991, five months after the youth's arrival, to change his visa to one of indefinite leave to remain. It was refused in June 1992 and he missed the 14-day appeal period, due to ill-health.

He appealed in December 1992 but the Home Office said it would not be considered. The appeal tribunal is now considering whether to uphold a deportation notice. A decision is expected soon.

"It took Jay a long time to adjust, and now he is doing well. To kick him out of the country is ludicrous and inhumane," Mr Morley said.

Jayaram worked as a chef at Clearwell Castle, where Mr Morley ran a 15-bedroom hotel until he shut it last month. "There's no point, if we are going to leave."

Jayaram said: "I feel I have adjusted well to living here. I would be an outcast if I went back to the Himalayas. I call Richard my father . . . He has really looked after me."

The Home Office would say only: "When foreign nationals come over there is a procedure to be followed."

Clinton mourns Pan Am dead

US pledges to continue hunt as Lockerbie memorial dedicated

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

THE names of the 270 people blown out of the sky above Lockerbie rang into the air of a humid Washington afternoon yesterday as President Clinton dedicated a memorial in Arlington National Cemetery to the victims of the Pan Am bombing seven years ago.

They were read by representatives of thousands of relatives left behind to mourn: John Sommerville, Lindsay Ann Sommerville, Geraldine Anne Stephenson ... Each name was followed by a solemn tolling of a ship's bell.

Beneath the voices was an undertow of the engines of jet airliners with flight numbers other than Pan Am 103, which took off every five minutes from the airport close by.

"They fell to earth, our husbands, our sons, our wives, our sweethearts ..." the lachrymose voice of Helen Engelhardt, widow of Anthony Hawkins, declared over the loudspeaker.

Mr Clinton recalled "the day when death commanded the heavens". Of the sandy-red rotunda, made from 270 slates from Scotland, he said: "This simple monument speaks with a powerful voice." He pledged that the United States would never relax its efforts to bring the bombers to justice.

The next of kin sat on deckchairs, their eyes full, their knuckles white with grief. Every now and then a name read out would connect to a face in the crowd. "Boyd David Ludlow", and a woman winced with pain and buried her face in the collar of the man next to her.

Rosemary Mild, of Severna in Maryland, could not sit but walked along at the back of the crowd. Her daughter, Miriam, aged 20, had been killed. "I shall never have my daughter back ... but this is a place to come and remember her by. I'm grateful to the Scottish to give us this, a permanent place to come."

But the calm has evoked wrath as well as reverence. Some families, mainly British, pointedly stayed away yesterday and will hold their own ceremony at the site today. They are angry at what they see as cover-up and inaction by the governments of Britain, France and the US.

The pomp in Arlington added more insult to some victims. M. S. Shastri had come from Bombay to honour the memory of his daughter, Mridula. She had been a student at Oxford and had booked a treat for Christmas in New York aboard Pan Am flight 103.

Mr Shastri was now trapped behind a yellow plastic rope, stopped from entering the ceremony area by a man dressed in a kilt. "I don't understand it, I don't understand it," he said. "I lost my daughter. Yes, this thing does do something to help, but I can't get in."

"Don't worry", the man with the kilt said. "You will get to see the president."

"We don't care about that," Mr Shastri's son said. "This is the ceremony." And the names rolled on: Amy Elizabeth Shapiro, Mridula Shastri ...

Genevieve Walters, from Palm Beach, was also stuck behind a cordon while the name of her dead son, Richard Armstrong Crawley, was read out. "I'm so grateful to the Scottish for this. But now I just wish they would at least give me a chair," she said.

Eventually a chair came and they were ushered through. "I know nothing can change," Mrs Walters said. "But I shall get to see the stones from Scotland. To think, that's where my boy was killed."

Doctors' advice to pay for cervical smears sparks row

continued from page one

year test on the NHS. She was also worried about the relationship the practice might have with the private clinic."

There have been a number of well publicised rationing decisions made in Berkshire recently and Mrs Williams added: "I feel this is indicative of the climate of health care in Berkshire. I have heard of other instances where this has been suggested. Many women will be inclined to take their doctor's advice on this issue.

"The cost of a private smear is £15 to £20. For women on a low income this is a lot of money and they won't be able to afford it. This is another example of the creeping privatisation that is occuring in the NHS. If it is true medically that the smears should be carried out every three years, then this should be provided on the NHS.

"Women won't know whether to hang on for five years, and perhaps worry, or to pay privately every three years. Women will be confused."

One private family planning clinic in London said yesterday it charged £45 for a "well woman check up" including a cervical smear and breast examination.

Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokesman, said: "This is further evidence of creeping privatisation in the NHS. Women receiving this letter will feel that they have to go private to avoid the life-threatening disease of cervical cancer."

Dr Young refused to comment on the letter, saying it was "inappropriate" to do so.

"I can't make any comment on this at all, I'm afraid. I'm very sorry, but it is inconvenient for me to talk to you at the moment. I have no comment to make at all," he said.

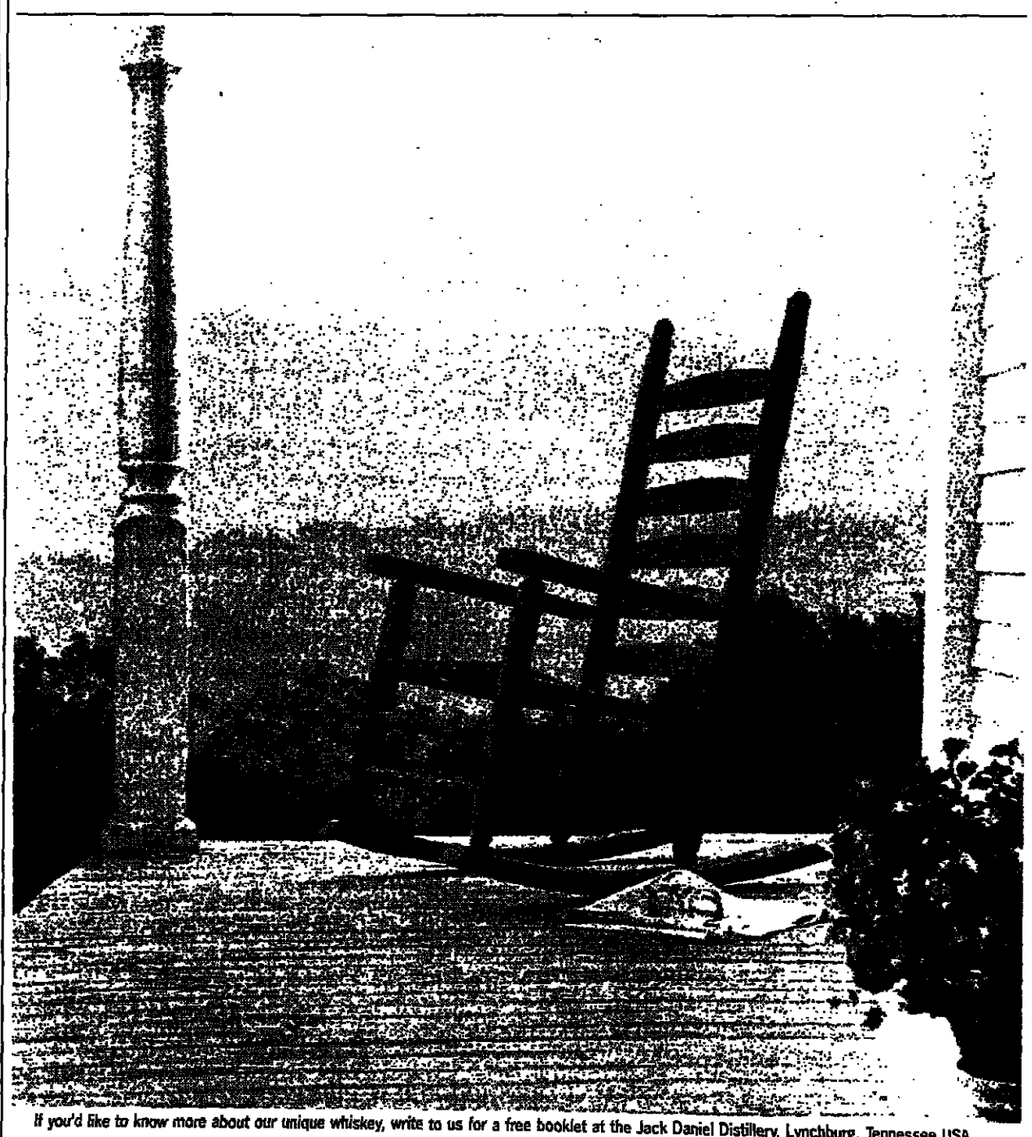
Department of Health guidelines say all women aged between 20 and 64 should have a smear at least every five years, but this can be three-yearly if health authorities prefer. In 1991, the last year for which figures are available, 46 per cent of health authorities screened every five years, 39 per cent screened every three years, and the rest offered a mix depending on the age of the women.

A National Audit Office report in 1992 said screening every three years would cut cervical cancer by 91 per cent, while screening every five years cut it by 84 per cent.

Family doctors are paid £2,415 a year if they give cervical smears to 80 per cent of eligible women on their lists, and £805 if they screen between 50 and 80 per cent.

In his grandfather's old wardrobe, Jez inspects a thriving small crop of cannabis greatly assisted by a 600-watt sodium light bulb. "What beauts!" he enthuses, gently stroking a leaf. "You can almost see them growing." Jez is one of many home producers who have created a million pound trade in lighting equipment and marijuana seed — and the business is legal.

Guardian page 15



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Victim and killer: Richard Everitt and Badrul Miah

Vivek Chaudhary in Somers Town

Stone reminder . . . the table bearing the name of Richard Everitt, the 15-year-old killed by an Asian gang whose 'blood was up' PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MANSELL

Race tension after white boy's death

THE WREATHS and floral tributes marking the spot where 15-year-old Richard Everitt was killed last year have been removed and a stone tablet bearing his name has been erected in their place.

At the end of the week which saw the jailing for life of Badrul Miah for the murder of Richardlast August in Somers Town, north London, the spectre of his death continues to loom over the inner-city area which is blighted by unemployment, poverty and racism.

The killing, which the Old Bailey trial heard was carried out by an Asian gang whose "blood was up and therefore any white boy would serve as a target", sparked a vicious cycle of racial violence, directed mainly against the Bangladeshi community. It led to a deterioration in relations between young Bangladeshis and their white peers and police.

According to the Camden Racial Equality Council, there were a staggering 271 racial incidents reported in and around Somers Town, an area at the back of King's Cross station near the heart of the capital, for the first six months of this year.

Dharmendra Kanani, director of the REC said: "At one stage, clashes between rival white and Bangladeshi gangs were a daily occurrence. The tension and violence has been so severe that the authorities have not come across anything like this before — we didn't know how to cope."

The run-down homes and flats in Somers Town house some of the poorest people in Britain. Unemployment among whites is at 29 per cent and among Bangladeshis it is 32 per cent. Fifty-nine per cent of Bangladeshis suffer overcrowding.

A form of apartheid has also emerged in the education system, with some schools and nurseries being exclusively white and others Asian.

Huw Salisbury, head of South Camden Community school where 60 per cent of the pupils are of Asian origin and where Richard Everitt was a pupil said: "I don't think there's been a time when Asian pupils or their families have not experienced difficulties. The violence and abuse has been virtually constant over the past three years."

The school has set up a forum where pupils from different races meet to discuss issues that effect the community. Understandably, racial violence has featured prominently. Meetings between teachers from different schools have also been held.

Dharmendra Kanani . . . 'we didn't know how to cope'

Mr Salisbury said: "One step forward would be to have a situation where the community supports integrated institutions. You can't have a community with polarised schools."

Many feel that the answer is economic regeneration. The Somers Town Area Partnership, comprising different local agencies, has been formed to help attract investment and create employment.

Mr Kanani said: "We need to galvanise people around the issues of unemployment, poverty and bad housing. The problem is how do you tackle racism and the chronic socio-economic problems."

What concerns many is the alienation felt by many young Bangladeshis. While no one denies the tragedy and brutality of Richard Everitt's killing, they point to the fact that several serious attacks on Bangladeshis have not been investigated by police with the same gusto.

A local youth worker said: "It's going to take a long time to rebuild the trust. We just hope that the next time a Bangladeshi is attacked, the police will apply the same standards that they applied to the Everitt case. Most don't believe that will happen."

Lawyers representing Miah have already stated that they will appeal against his life sentence and are also planning to launch a campaign to expose what they say has been a miscarriage of justice. With plans for a public meeting and petition many fear a local white backlash.

Talks fail to bridge the Ulster gap

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE depth of the gulf between the Government and Sinn Fein over the path to talks was revealed yesterday when, after a four-hour meeting, the Northern Ireland minister, Michael Ancram, said he rejected the republicans' three main objectives.

Mr Ancram took the unusual step of inviting reporters inside Stormont Castle to "set the record straight" after Sinn Fein's chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, had accused the Government of seeking an IRA surrender.

Mr Ancram said Sinn Fein had three proposals which it said would break the impasse in the peace process: a fixed date for all-party talks to begin; that the international body to examine decommissioning should include all weapons, including those of the British Army; and that Downing Street should abandon its demand that the IRA start to decommission before Sinn Fein enters full all-party talks.

He rejected all three proposals as totally unacceptable. Sinn Fein knew the Government's position very clearly. Indeed, it was the purpose of the twin-track policy to approach the present difficulties over arms from a different perspective.

But while Sinn Fein stopped just short of rejecting the twin-track approach — which has the backing of Dublin and President Clinton — there appeared to be no grounds for believing that the gaps between the two sides can now be bridged.

Mr McGuinness said the Government's refusal to move on his party's demands was a sign that the Unionists retained their veto in Northern Ireland. "A Unionist veto on political dialogue has permeated through everything we have been told by this British government."

Mr Ancram said there was no question of a Unionist veto and in a briefing paper which outlined how the international body on decommissioning might function he offered a target date for all-party talks once its work had begun.

Earlier Sinn Fein sources hinted that the talks might be called off unless the Government moved to bridge the gap. However, Mr Ancram said he was surprised to have been given a new Sinn Fein document at the end of yesterday's meeting which would now have to be examined. Such a move suggests that the talking is not yet over.

Protests force Government to shelve Dover port privatisation

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

PLANS to privatise the port of Dover, which would have netted the Exchequer around £140 million, are to be dropped by the Government. The announcement will be made early next week.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, has been forced to bow to a vociferous campaign mounted by the port authorities. They played on unfounded fears that the port might fall into the hands of Calais and used the names of the Queen Mother and the wartime singer, Dame Vera Lynn, to good effect. It was a campaign which the Government could not resist.

The Government will press ahead with the privatisation of Ipswich and Tyne, two of the three ports which the Department of Transport has been considering for privatisation.

Sir George will make the most of a bad job by saying that the time is not appropriate to privatise Dover because of uncertainties about the Channel Tunnel and that a decision will have to be left until after the election.

Dover is not opposed to privatisation, but says that the competition being whipped up as ferries and the tunnel compete for business makes a deferred decision the best option.

Graham Allen, Labour's transport spokesman, said: "If this is true, then it is good news, and a good signal for the campaign against rail privatisation. There is no need to privatise a throughly good going concern. Dover will be relieved."

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Racing

Snow Princess can be in credit

Ron Cox goes flat out for another winning favourite in the Tote November Handicap

FLAT racing stretches into the dark days of December, thanks to the arrival of all-weather racing. But for many the season ends here.

The Tote Credit November Handicap at Doncaster today is certainly the last big betting event before the jumpers take over, and backers have fared pretty well in recent seasons with three of the last six favourites successful.

Snow Princess can provide further cheer. A filly in form and improving is always to be respected at this late stage, and it is no surprise that Snow Princess has been popular in the ante-post market since it became clear the weights were set to rise considerably.

From a lowly 6st 9lb, Lord Huntingdon's filly has moved up to 8st 2lb and she almost certainly remains a step ahead of the handicapper after completing her hat-trick in a strongly-run race at Newmarket last month.

She bids to become the seventh three-year-old to win the November Handicap in the last 10 years and her trainer won the race with another of the same age, Sailcloth, in 1977 before going close with Mr Pintips — also a three-year-old — 10 years later.

Snow Princess, a late developing daughter of Ela-Mana-Mou, had to be ridden along at half way on her last start but finished strongly to win convincingly. They generally go a good gallop in the November Handicap, which will suit her admirably.

Lord Huntingdon has been among the winners in the past few weeks and also runs Whitechapel, who is not out of it despite having to carry top weight. He runs consistently well in the good mile and a half handicaps.

Dato Star, unbeaten in three National Hunt Flat races, had no luck in running in his warm-up over course and distance last month. But he looks high in the weights and would prefer soft ground.

Reimei, with Frankie Dettori riding for big handicap specialist Reg Akehurst, is an obvious eye-catcher following a satisfactory reappearance at Ascot, and Foundry Lane may well have been put aside for this in a bid to improve on stable-mate Penny A Day's second last year.

However, Snow Princess (3.25) is expected to prove herself a worthy favourite.

Capias and Naked Welcome, the original November Handicap top weights, have been re-routed to the Cooperative Bank Serlby Stakes.

Both could be foiled by Henry Cecil's Al Widyan (2.20), who clearly appreciated the step up in distance when winning easily at Leicester. Although this opposition is stronger, Al Widyan has had the benefit of a light campaign and Cecil is finishing the season in good style.

Art Of War (2.50), a one time Classic hope, had to go to Hamilton to open his account for the year. Gelded since the Greenham Stakes in April, when he ran far too freely, he quickened smartly from off the pace to beat Subzero and Alzianah in a handy little conditions race at the Scottish track.

Sprinting is his game and Art Of War can redeem some more of his tarnished reputation with a follow-up victory in the Keepmoat Holdings Stakes.

Chepstow is the place to be for jump fans. The Tote Silver Trophy is a fascinating handicap hurdle, in which at least half a dozen can be given sound chances, but backers of Conquering Leader (1.30) should get a good run for their money.

Highly rated by Nicky Henderson, her trainer, Conquering Leader has done plenty of home work with a view to this valuable prize.

She ran out one of last season's easiest winners when taking the mares' final at Newbury and went on to finish third behind Morgans Harbour and Jack Button at Aintree. That was over three miles, but Conquering Leader is not short of pace.

Last season's top juvenile hurdles form is well represented by Silver Wedge, Balanak and Anzum. The last-named seems sure to benefit from today's extra half-mile and could be the danger.

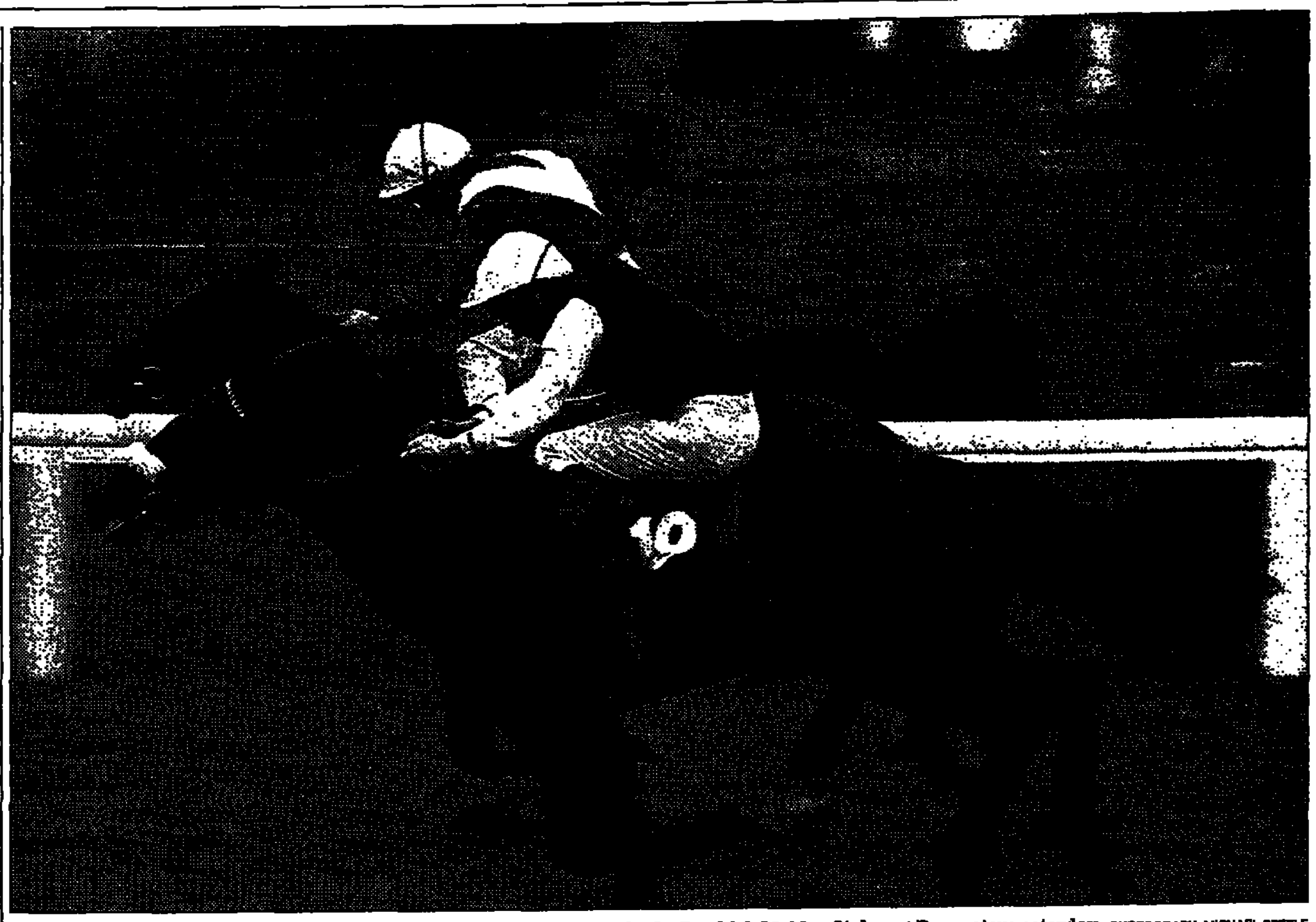
Berude Not To and Hill Of Tullow are interesting recruits to fences in the Rising Stars Novice Chase. But on this occasion it might pay to side with experience in the shape of General Command (2.00), who turned in a good round of jumping at Newbury.

Racing channel under orders

SATELLITE Information Services have announced its presenters for its new Racing Channel, to be launched on Monday.

Richard Pitman, Richard Hoiles, Mike Cattermole and Jim McGrath have been offered contracts and Hoiles will present the first programme. George Irvine, general manager of the channel said: "I have gone for a blend of youth and experience and although I have employed four I am still screen testing.

"Ideally I am looking for a final pool of six presenters."



Close call . . . Miss Riviera (noseband) gets the better of Green Barries in the Dunkirk Maiden Stakes at Doncaster yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Dunlop on 126 mark after Doncaster double

JOHN DUNLOP, the Arundel trainer, took his season's tally to 126 at Doncaster yesterday when he landed a double with Chief Bee and Wahiba Sands.

Chief Bee's success in the Royal British Legion Stakes was never in serious doubt from a long way out. The filly was pulling double for Kevin Darley as she raced alongside the hard-ridden Ahla and responded readily once Darley asked her to quicken, cruising home by four lengths.

Wahiba Sands, also owned by Dunlop, had earlier started the ball rolling when staying on strongly to repel Private Song by half a length in division one of the Flanders Maiden Stakes.

Wahiba Sands is a half-brother to Royal Ascot winner Medaille Militiare and Dunlop's travelling head lad, Robert Hamilton, said: "He's about twice the size of his brother and when he fills into himself he should make a really nice horse."

Miss Riviera showed plenty of promise on her debut when showing a good turn of foot to defeat Green Barries in the Dunkirk Maiden Stakes.

It was a disappointing outcome for Green Barries's jockey Tyrone Williams who has now gone 90 rides without a victory. His agony was compounded when the stewards banned him for two days (November 13 and 14) for careless riding after they found Green Barries had hampered the winner.

Michael Hills, who rode Miss Riviera, went on to clinch a 219-1 treble with victories on Sue's Artiste in the Unknown Soldier Stakes and Charlie Sillett in the concluding Poppy Handicap.

Brian Smart, the Lambourn trainer, continued his good run when Polly Golightly scraped home by a short head in the Normandy Beaches Nursery.

At Uttoxeter Large Action, runner-up in last year's Champion Hurdle, made a successful start to his fencing career in the Undergear 'Terra Tire' Novice Chase, but he was far from foot perfect.

"If you can get 10-1 with a run for the Champion Hurdle, take it!" was how Oliver Sherwood, the gelding's trainer, summed it up.

Jamie Osborne sat tight when Large Action, who started 7-2 on, got too close to the second last fence before readily outspeeding Spinning Steel to collect by four lengths.

"I could hardly watch the race as I was so nervous," admitted Sherwood. "Jamie said he was feeling the ground a little bit and was a bit novicy at one or two. It's a long way to next March and I'm not going to say if he'll run in the Champion Hurdle or the Arkle Chase at this stage.

"But to be fair to the horse, he was never out of third gear and Jamie added he was putting himself right at a few. I'd like to think he could have another run over fences."

Doncaster card with form for TV races

12.50 Shawmit
1.20 Fishell
1.50 Agwa
2.20 Al Widyan
2.50 Art Of War
3.25 SNOW PRINCESS (nap)
4.00 Merit

FORM GUIDE – CAPIAS: Not disgraced in a Group 2 race latest, ... 6th btn 6l behind De Quest (Longchamp 1m4f, Gd-Fm).
BLUSHING FLAME: Winner of a valuable handicap over this course and distance, ... strong pressure, bt Step Aloft nk (Gd-Fm).
JELLABY ASKHIR: Disputed lead, no extra from two out, 4th, ... FLAME (rec 5lb), led 9f, soon btn, 3l last of 7 (Newmarket 1m4f, Gd).
LABIBEH: Led 11 furlongs out, no extra final two, 4th of 12, btn 6l, to Phantom Gold (Newbury 1m 4f, good to ...

Channel 4

2.20 COOPERATIVE BANK SERLBY STAKES 1m 4f £11,421

401	52-1126 CAPIAS (20) (D) J Gosden 4-9-5	L Dettori 6
402	220001 BLUSHING FLAME (14) (CD) M Stoute 4-9-0	M Hills 1
403	400002 DREAMS END (9) (D) J Bradley 7-9-0	G Bind 8
404	41104 JELLABY ASKHIR (26) (D) R Akehurst 3-8-12	R Hughes 4
405	111214 LABIBEH (14) (D) J Dunlop 3-8-10	W Carson 2
406	10-0461 AL WIDYAN (12) (D) H Cecil 3-8-7	R Cochrane 5
407	410301 NAKED WELCOME (28) (C) (D) M Fetherston-Godley 3-8-7	J Reid 7
408	21644 ROYAL CIRCLE (26) R Charlton 3-8-2	K Darley 3

TOP FORM TIPS: Naked Welcome 8, Capias 7, Al Widyan 6

Betting: 4-1 Naked Welcome, 9-2 Capias, Labibeh, 6-1 Jellaby Askhir, Al Widyan, Blushing Flame, 8-1 Royal Circle, 25-1 Dreams End. 8 runners

Channel 4

4.00 COALITE DRAGON HANDICAP 2m 110yds £8,286

1	031600 BLAZE AWAY (21) (D) I Balding 4-9-10	L Dettori 1
2	601-545 TAROUDANT (231) (C) (D) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 8-8-7	A Culhane 2
3	212102 ISTABRAQ (16) J Gosden 3-8-5	W Carson 6
4	2305-41 OLD RED (21) Mrs M Reveley 5-8-3	L Charnock 11
5	452204 GOOD HAND (15) (CD) J Watts 9-8-1	M Birch 7
6	122362 SUPREME STAR (16) P Hedger 4-8-1	Dane O'Neill (5) 14
7	300321 SUGAR MILL (15) (C) Mrs M Reveley 5-8-0	K Darley 8
8	255245 PARADISE NAVY (16) (C) C Egerton 6-8-11	R Hughes 13
9	333121 SEA VICTOR (15) (C) (D) J L Harris 3-8-10	P Robinson 9
10	210104 INCHCAILLOCH (21) J King 6-8-10	G Bardwell 4
11	352630 THUNDERHEART (16) (D) J O'Neill 4-8-8	G Duffield 5
12	020032 NON VINTAGE (15) (C) M Chapman 4-8-0	Martin Dwyer (7) 12
13	060011 MERIT (2) (3lb ex) P Cole 3-7-8	J Quinn 3
14	060513 COLERIDGE (16) (C) (D) J Sheehan 7-7-8	A Mackay 10*

TOP FORM TIPS: Merit 8, Inchcailloch 7, Sugar Mill 6

Betting: 6-1 Istabraq, 7-1 Merit, Old Red, Inchcailloch, 8-1 Sugar Mill, 10-1 Supreme Star, Sea Victor, 12-1 Blaze Away, Taroudant, Coleridge. 14 runners

FORM GUIDE – ISTABRAQ: Led 11f, kept on well when headed, 2nd btn nk by En Vacances, with PARADISE NAVY (rec 10lb), soon btn, abt 10l 5th (Newbury 2m, Gd-Sft).
OLD RED: In Cesarewitch Handicap, kept on strongly to bt Nanton Point 1l, with INCHCAILLOCH (rec 3lb), kept on well closing stages, 3l 4th and BLAZE AWAY (gv 14lb), outpaced 4f out, ran on again, 3l 7th (Newmarket 2m2f, Gd-Fm).
SUGAR MILL: At this course, led over 3f out, held on well to bt NON VINTAGE (rec 12lb) nk, challenged final 2f, no extra near line, with GOOD HAND (gv 9lb), put in best work at finish, 6l 4th (1m6f, Gd-Fm).
SEA VICTOR: Tough sort, latest, led 3f out, went clear, held on when challenged, bt SUPREME STAR (rec 4lb), shd, stayed on strongly closing stages, with COLERIDGE (rec 27lb), one pace closing stages, 1l 3rd and THUNDERHEART (rec 3lb), hampered 3f out, not recover, 4l 9th (Nottingham 2m, Gd-Fm).
MERIT: Makes quick reappearance after impressive win on Thursday, drew clear to bt Tremendisto 9l (Edinburgh 1m7f, Sft).

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SANDOWN	104	204	304
UTTOXETER	105	205	305
N'CASTLE	106	206	306
NAVAN	120	220	320

Marston out

WARREN MARSTON has been stood down for seven days following a fall from Ferrufino in the Flint Bishop and Barnett Novice Handicap Hurdle at Uttoxeter yesterday.

Although he was able to walk back to the weighing room unaided and reported that he felt fine, an examination by the course doctor showed that he had suffered mild concussion.

● Blinkered for the first time — DONCASTER: 1.20 Stop Play. NEWCASTLE: 2.45 The Boiler White. UTTOXETER: 2.50 Jymjam Johnny. WINCANTON: 3.30 Blake's Wonder.

Chepstow (N.H.) with form guide for televised races

1.00 Kibreet
1.30 Conquering Leader
2.00 General Command
2.35 Latest Thyme
3.10 See More Business
3.40 Wandering Light
4.10 Lightning Lad

BBC-1

1.00 GUY FAWKES HANDICAP CHASE 3m 110yds

BBC-1

1.30 TOTE SILVER TROPHY HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f 110yds

BBC-1

2.00 RISING STARS NOVICE CHASE 2m 3f 110yds

2.35 NOVEMBER NOVICE HURDLE

3.10 NOVEMBER NOVICE HURDLE

3.40 STAYERS NOVICE HURDLE 3m £2,108

1	33030-1 BUCKHOUSE BOY (26) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-6	T Jenks
2	2103-41 PHARANEAR (66) D Nicholson 5-11-6	A Maguire
3	0300-1 SECRET BID (31) (D) R Alner 5-11-6	A P McCoy
4	50681-2 TOUR LEADER (17) (BF) R Buckler 6-11-6	M A Fitzgerald
5	1 SUMAFAR (30) N Graham 4-11-5	L Wyer
6	AFTER THE FOX Simon Earle 6-11-0	G Upton

4.10 NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

Sandown (N.H.)

Basketball

He's English, he's hot and he's in the NBA

Robert Pryce reports on how a Stockport Grammar old boy sweated and studied and made his debut for Cleveland Cavaliers

JOHN AMAECHI had a dream, and it came true last night. The former Stockport Grammar School boy has overcome all obstacles to make it to the NBA.

Amaechi comes from what could be termed a broken home, but he grew up straight and tall. He is intelligent, articulate and especially generous to the young and needy.

He graduated from Pennsylvania State University last year and began studying for a PhD in clinical child psychology. Then last night at the Orlando Arena he made his NBA debut for the Cleveland Cavaliers. If there is a heaven, his mother should be its proudest soul today.

Eight years ago, after he told his mother that he was disenchanted with rugby, a sport at which he had shown enough promise to earn a place at No. 8 for Cheshire Schools, she set him up with a Manchester basketball club called Shop Local. Within six months of trying the game for the first time, he told his mother that he wanted to become a basketball player, and they sat down and mapped a route to the NBA.

It was a goal so remote as to be almost invisible, the longest of long shots. At the time, no Englishman had made it.

Wendy Amaechi was a divorced GP, always practical, organised and self-reliant, and her son is blessed with the same traits. She raised three children by herself; he transformed himself.

He was a skinny 16-year-old, unversed in the basic skills, lacking the explosive athleticism that characterises the game's outstanding players, but he practised, studied and worked out.

"He was a very quick learner with a superb attitude for the game," says Joe Forber, who was then the Manchester United junior coach. "There have been players down there who had more natural ability. It's the ambition thing that brought him through."

Amaechi's progress was not always smooth. "I've never managed to do anything the easy or the orthodox way," he says.

He stumbled through his first few games at St John's High School in Toledo, until the points started to flow at a tournament in Florida over Christmas 1989. He made no impact in his first year at university — at Vanderbilt, in Nashville — and he had to sit out his second after transferring to Penn State. Then he was passed over in the NBA draft this year.

But Amaechi kept working — he had hired a personal trainer — and when the call came he was ready. Four NBA clubs offered him places at their rookie camps. He chose Cleveland, he says, "because I thought I could come in and help them".

Cleveland had 18 players at their rookie camp, a merciless four-day cull of marginal candidates for a place in their 12-man squad, and eight survived to join the rest of the players for pre-season training. Only Amaechi remains. Cleveland continued to make cuts until Wednesday, when they released John Battle, a guard with 10 years' NBA experience, to bring their squad down to the required number.

They are still undermanned at centre, which is the position occupied by the biggest of the NBA's big men. Brad Daugherty, a 19-stone seven-footer, will miss the first few months of the season after surgery on a herniated lumbar disc and John "Hot Rod" Williams (6ft 11in, 18st) was traded to Phoenix last month, leaving the spot open for Amaechi (6ft 9in, 19st).

The first pre-season game he started, against the Boston Celtics, brought him hard up against Eric Montross (7ft, 18st). "I was extremely hesitant," Amaechi says. "I wasn't ready for it."

But the English Cavalier persevered, in his roundhead way, and eventually earned his place. In eight pre-season outings, he averaged 21 minutes, 7.6 points and three rebounds a game.

Cleveland's opening NBA game last night could have been more daunting, but Orlando's Shaquille O'Neal (7ft 1in, 21½st), the biggest of the NBA's new stars, has broken a thumb, leaving the centre position to the far less formidable Jon Koncak (7ft, 18st). Tonight, after flying to Miami by the club's private jet, Amaechi is due to face Kevin Willis (7ft, 17st), a veteran best known for his defence and rebounding.

"I don't think it's quite as glamorous as people believe," Amaechi says, "but certainly the competition and the standard of play is as high as I ever hoped it would be."

Not to mention the money. Amaechi has signed a two-year contract for the NBA's minimum wage, which means that this season he will earn a mere $200,000 (£130,000).

Wendy Amaechi died of cancer last summer, just before her son graduated, 16 months before their 7½-year plan came to fruition. "Part of the plan was to have her there when it happened," he says. "Sometimes I wish I could ask her . . ."

For the purposes of this article, Forber will have to speak for her. "He's done amazingly well," he says. "I'm very proud of him."

Hitting the heights . . . Amaechi in NBA-attracting form for his alma mater Penn State

Tennis

Rusedski and Henman out for revenge

David Irvine at Telford

FIVE months ago on grass at London's Queen's Club Britain's new recruit, Greg Rusedski, and Tim Henman — now established as the two top-ranked men — lost to Mark Petchey and Jeremy Bates at the Stella Artois tournament. Today, in the semi-finals here at the Guardian Direct nationals, both will be striving to reverse those results.

With the top four seeds advancing to the penultimate stage for the first time in the championships' 13 years, the competition is set to produce its best-ever finish. Of the survivors only Bates has won the title — six times — and, with his retirement imminent, is keen to do so again.

However, a wrist injury could prove a handicap against an opponent he says has improved out of all recognition in the past few months. "It will be fun playing Tim again, but he hits the ball a bit too hard for me these days."

Yesterday Henman, who may break into the world's top 100 before the end of the year, scored a comfortable 6–3, 6–3 win over Jamie Delgado as Bates was defeating the left-hander Barry Cowan 6–2, 7–6. In the other quarters a confident Rusedski outgunned Luke Milligan 6–4, 6–2, downing him with his 13th ace, and the No. 6 seed Colin Beecher pushed Petchey to a third set before the fourth seed won through 6–4, 4–6, 6–3.

That Rusedski's controversial arrival in June has contributed to an overdue improvement in the men's game is something which all his rivals agree readily. Even Petchey — who opposed his "transfer" initially and remains sceptical — can recognise the positive atmosphere surrounding a rival ranked 41 in the world.

"If Greg gets a lot of kids to take up the game, that's great," says Petchey. "He has a good public image. And he projects himself as he does because he has that confidence. He's that sort of character. But it can get in your face."

As a player Petchey felt Rusedski was "unbelievable when on form" — although he admits having taken great pleasure from defeating him 6–4, 1–6, 6–3 at Queen's in his first match as a Briton. "He so wanted to make a good impression but I didn't let him."

Petchey may have more difficulty today as Rusedski, who his new coach Warren Jacques believes will make the top-20 next year, no longer feels an outsider and has shown impressive form. Yet it is nine years since Stuart Bale became the only left-hander to win the £9,000 title at Andrew Castle's expense.

After seeing off Milligan, Rusedski was so besieged by autograph hunters that Alan Mills, the referee, had to insist he leave the court so the next match could start. Yet Rusedski has an appeal for youngsters that the LTA is keen to foster.

This afternoon's women's singles final matches Clare Wood, the British No. 1 for the past two years, against Sam Smith, the player many believe is most likely to depose her now she is back in full-time tennis after earning a degree at university.

Wood, who had too much experience, ended the 17-year-old qualifier Amanda Janes' fantasy week by winning the first semi-final 6–3, 6–3 and Smith rang down the curtain on Jo Durie's 18-year career in the second by recovering to win 5–7, 6–1, 6–4.

Although Janes, whose nervousness was apparent early on — she double-faulted eight times in the first set — rallied to lead 3–1 in the second Wood, who won the title in 1989 and 1993, was too wily and steady for her.

Brilliant Courier ends Chang's dreams of a French double

JIM COURIER yesterday returned to the form that once made him the world No. 1 with a straight-sets win over his fellow American Michael Chang in the quarter-finals of the Paris Open. The victory put paid to Chang's attempts to become the first man to win this indoor event and the French Open.

Courier, the sixth seed, used his devastating baseline strokes of old to tame the fourth seed 6–2, 7–6 and reach the last four of this prestigious tournament for the first time.

Victory in tomorrow's final would give Courier a berth in the ATP Tour World Championship featuring the world's top eight players in Frankfurt later this month.

But standing in his way is Pete Sampras, the top seed whom Courier faces today. A ruthless Sampras left the Swiss veteran Jakob Hlasek helpless, and needed only 74 minutes to beat the unseeded player 6–2, 6–3. The US and Wimbledon champion has yet to drop a set in this tournament.

South Africa's Wayne Ferreira, who owns a flat in Montmartre, was equally impressive as he thumped the Czech Daniel Vacek 6–2, 6–4 in 60 minutes with an ace on match point.

"I'm playing exceptionally well at the moment and I definitely feel I can win here," Ferreira said. His optimism may be justified after an unexpected victory over Sampras in Lyon last month.

Wincanton (N.H.)

1.25 Storm Run
1.55 Gospel
2.30 Atours
3.00 Wise Approach
3.30 Blasket Hero
4.00 Zajira
4.30 Southsea Scandals

Going: Good (good to firm in places). ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest outing

1.25 [illegible]

1.55 [illegible]

Channel 4

2.30 [illegible]

Channel 4

3.00 [illegible]

3.30 [illegible]

4.00 [illegible]

4.30 [illegible]

● John Dunlop runs Lavinia Fontana (Giovanni Forte) in Milan today hoping to repeat last year's success in the Premio Chiusura (7f). Her nine rivals include the Lord Huntingdon-trained pair Prince of India (Luca Sorrentino) and Sharp Prod (David Harrison).

● Lady Herries sends Taufan's Melody, who won at Lyon last month, back to France for the 10-runner Grand Prix de la Ville de Nantes (1½ m) at Nantes tomorrow. Ray Cochrane rides.

Newcastle (N.H.)

1.10 Tom Brodie
1.40 Supertop
2.15 Keep Your Distance
2.45 Copper Mine
3.20 De Jordaan
3.55 South Westerly

Going: Firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest race.

1.10 EBF 'NH' NOVICE HURDLE (Qualifier) 2m £2,071

1	000-1	SALVO (28) (D) Mrs M Stark 4-11-5	Mr S Swiers
2	0	DARK BUOY (21) B Mactaggart 6-11-0	G Lee (3)
3	214-2	TOM BRODIE (45) (BF) J Howard Johnson 5-11-0	J F Titley

Betting: 4-7 Tom Brodie, 7-4 Salvo, 14-1 Dark Buoy. 3 runners

1.40 TOP OF THE NORTH NOVICE CHASE 2m 110yds £2,697

1	0244-11	SUPERTOP (7) (D) L Lungo 7-12-0	T Reed
2	0/44U-P4	ANOTHER NICK (21) J Hubbuck 9-11-2	B Storey
3	0/3-F322	KILLMOR LAD (7) P Monteith 8-11-2	A Dobbin
4	P0050U-	JUST MOLLY (161) W Reed 8-10-11	Mr C Bonner (3)

Betting: 4-6 Supertop, 3-1 Killmor Lad, 8-1 Another Nick, 20-1 Just Molly. 4 runners

2.15 [illegible]

2.45 [illegible]

3.20 [illegible]

3.55 [illegible]

Results

DONCASTER [illegible]

UTTOXETER [illegible]

HEXHAM [illegible]

Uttoxeter (N.H.)

1.20 Trisquare
1.50 Mr Bureaucrat
2.20 Stoney Burke
2.50 Kelly Mac
3.20 Father Sky
3.50 Andros Prince
4.20 Gone For Lunch

Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.

1.20 BILL LOVE MAIDEN HURDLE (DIV I) 2m £2,484

1	24-	BELLROI (371) M Tompkins 4-11-0	D Bridgwater
2	0/0U-	BLACK ARROW (919) D O'Brien 8-11-0	Major O Ellwood
3	03	CADES BAY (32) N Twiston-Davies 4-11-0	D Walsh (5)
4	06//-30	CAPTAIN STOCKFORD (35) P Wegmann 8-11-0	S Fowler (7)
5	R-	DONTFORGET INSIGHT (365) C Brooks 4-11-0	D Gallagher
6		FAIR FLYER P Bevan 6-11-0	T Eley
7		HAWKER HUNTER C Egerton 4-11-0	J Railton
8		HAZARD A GUESS Mrs J Ramsden 5-11-0	R Garritty
9	00-	PERUROYAL (222) W Clay 5-11-0	—
10	30-	REVEREND BROWN (238) O Sherwood 5-11-0	DOUBTFUL
11		SHANIK J O'Shea 5-11-0	D Bentley
12	0	TOP SLICE (21) W Mann 7-11-0	Mr D Verco
13		TRISQUARE K Bailey 4-11-0	DOUBTFUL
14	3	ALL ON (21) J Hetherton 4-10-9	D Byrne

[illegible]

1.50 [illegible]

2.20 [illegible]

2.50 [illegible]

3.20 [illegible]

3.50 [illegible]

4.20 [illegible]

15	0-	THE NAUGHTY VICAR (219) S Mellor 5-11-0	Chris Webb (5)
16	0-	MILLY LE MOSS (322) R Eckley 8-10-6	V Slattery

Betting: 3-1 Greg's Profiles, 7-2 Gone For Lunch, 5-1 Beggars Banquet, 6-1 Take Cover, 8-1 Alpha Leather, 10-1 Ice Cold In Alex, The Grey Friar. 15 runners

● Uncle Keeny, who won the second division of the maiden hurdle at Uttoxeter yesterday, may now go to Cheltenham tomorrow week for a three mile hurdle. Jonjo O'Neill, the gelding's trainer, said: "He's always threatened to be a nice horse and the blinkers helped him concentrate."

Soccer

The man who really brought in Juninho

Cynthia Bateman meets the Boro fan who sent Bryan Robson flying to Brazil

IAN WILSON speaks in the way Brazilians play football: he is fluent, articulate and quick. And his technique has become polished since it became known he is the man who first brought Juninho to the attention of Middlesbrough.

There had been a rumour that the man who wrote the letters to Bryan Robson and the chairman Steve Gibson promoting Juninho as the right player at the right price for the club was a Boro supporter living in Brazil. But now on the streets of Teesside Wilson has been dubbed Super Scout.

So how does a Darlington tax collector, whose closest association with Brazil was coffee and nuts, have the nerve and know-how to send Robson scurrying to Sao Paulo?

"I have been following Brazilian football since I was seven," said the 49-year-old. "There weren't many homes with television sets then but my grandparents had one and I watched Brazil play England. Even at that age I was struck by the different way of playing. They were so skilful. Much later I got a video of that game and I now realise how naive they were then. They were just emerging as a footballing nation but even so the way they played fascinated me.

"Then in 1958 Pele emerged and, for a lad of my age to see him come along at 17, it inspired you. I followed Brazilian football thereafter — for the last 37 years."

After decades of gleaning snippets of written information, the advent of satellite television put Brazil in Wilson's sitting room and he has become an authority on Brazilian players and clubs. He refers to the Brazil national side as "we" and "us".

He is a lifelong Boro supporter and used to be passed over the heads of the crowd down to the front like other boys at the old Ayresome Park ground. "I followed them through all their trials and tribulations but nowadays the town is alive."

When Bryan Robson took over, Wilson wrote to draw the club's attention to the quality on offer at reasonable prices in Brazil.

"It was the financial aspect more than anything. We have bought one of their best players for £4.5 million. How could you put someone like Romario on the same pedestal as say someone like Collymore. There is no comparison. Yet Liverpool paid £8.5 million for Collymore."

Juninho was the top name on Wilson's list and Robson, already interested in Brazilians playing in Europe, remembered Wilson's advice as he watched the 22-year-old against England at Wembley last summer. Juninho, acknowledged as one of the most exciting players in the world, was everything Wilson promised.

Gibson replied to Wilson, who is delighted the chairman still keeps his letter in his briefcase, and is not the least bit phased that he has not had direct contact with Robson. "Mr Robson has more to think about than meeting somebody who wrote him a letter. He is a busy man."

There has been no invitation from the club for Wilson to meet the player and he does not seek one. He will not even see Juninho make his debut. "I'm committed to watching my son play in the Teesside League. But my heart will be with them."

It is reward enough that Juninho has signed. "I am overjoyed," says Wilson. "To get a Brazilian footballer on Teesside is like a god walking in on us. It has given us a new lease of life."

But does he not feel an awesome sense of responsibility to see Juninho succeed? Not a bit of it. "Juninho is fabulous. His vision is such he will do things the supporters have never dreamed of," he said. He is not concerned about the 5ft 5in Juninho's physique: "I just have a personal feeling: referees might protect him." Nor has he any misgivings about the climate: "I saw a Bundesliga match in which Dunga was playing for Stuttgart and Jorginho for Bayern. It was five below but they still stood out.

"And I estimate he will be almost self-financing in a year's time. Boro sold 5,000 season tickets on the strength of his transfer and then there is merchandising."

The rebirth of the Brazil national side is producing new crops of players at grassroots level, he says, and by the 1998 World Cup "we will see Brazil returning to the glory days of the past".

In the meantime he has a list of current young players well worth a look by any managers with two or three million pounds in petty cash.

The one he would like to see join Juninho at Boro is Ze Elias, a brilliant young midfielder, who captains Brazil Under-19s and is currently with Corinthians. One can almost see the letter now: "Dear Mr Robson, may I draw your attention to..."

Brazil nut . . . Wilson, a tax collector in Darlington, has followed Brazilian football since he was seven MICHAEL STEELE

Uefa Cup draw

Forest's French fortune

David Lacey

AT LEAST England's last survivors in Europe should not starve next time. Having eased their way through Chablis country in the second round of the Uefa Cup, Nottingham Forest now face Lyon, the gourmet centre of France, for a place in the quarter-finals.

While Forest have done well to avoid Bayern Munich and Benfica, drawn together in the tie of the third round, not to mention AC Milan, Barcelona, Roma, PSV Eindhoven and Werder Bremen, their task is far from simple.

In fact, to judge by the searching examination which Forest were subjected by Auxerre on Tuesday, when Crossley's goalkeeping did much to preserve the 1-0 lead established by Steve Stone in the away leg, it could be very tricky.

Despite an indifferent start in the French league Lyon have already knocked out Farense of Portugal and Lazio, winning all of their four games. In particular Tuesday's 2-0 defeat of Lazio in Rome, which gave Lyon a 4-1 win on aggregate, should put Forest on their guard when the French side visit the City Ground in the opening leg.

● Newcastle's Kevin Keegan and Chelsea's Glenn Hoddle, among other Premiership managers, are likely to join the FA-sponsored inquest into England's latest failure in Europe.

The FA has already invited the managers of the six domestic clubs involved in Europe this season to the inquiry.

UEFA CUP: Third round: Bayern Munich v Benfica; PSV Eindhoven v Werder Bremen; Nottingham Forest v Lyon; Brondby v Roma; Milan v Sparta Prague; Bordeaux v Real Betis; Sevilla v Barcelona; Slavia Prague v Lens (Ties to be played on Nov 21 and Dec 5)

Cantona still the pride of the burgeoning foreign legion

Martin Thorpe assesses the worth of the imports, now 72, to the English game

IT SEEMS that these days there is some corner of an English field that is forever foreign. Today's arrival of Juninho in a corner of Middlesbrough that will forever be grateful brings to 72 the number of overseas players currently eligible to play in the Premiership.

The face of English football has never been so dark, or dusky, or blond or Teutonic. The Premiership is currently home to players from 28 different countries, and that does not include Ireland, Wales or Scotland.

The most common species is the Dutchman. There are 10 of them, followed by nine Norwegians and seven Australians. The rest come from as far afield as Georgia and Ghana, Barbados and Bolivia.

Last Saturday there were 39 foreigners either playing or on the bench in the Premiership. West Ham alone had five. Only Liverpool had no foreign aid.

So has the arrival of all these aliens been good for planet football? Largely, it has. Take the most successful of them. When the seagull landed at Manchester United, they had been trawling for the league title for 26 years. Eric Cantona provided the genius that finally brought United their Holy Grail, and he cost only £1.2 million.

The fact that in the preceding season Cantona had also sparked Leeds United to their first title in 18 years and now has three league championship medals to his name is testimony to the impact he has made. Unfortunately so was the eight-month ban for the kick at Crystal Palace.

The other player United most hate being without is also a foreigner, Peter Schmeichel, perhaps the best goalkeeper in Europe. He cost only £550,000 and it is arguable that United could not have won their two titles without his extraordinary presence either.

Trophies, however, are not always the currency of foreign success. To many the best foreigner in the Premiership is Ruud Gullit at Chelsea, apparently the best passer, crosser, header, shooter and dribbler at the club, a forceful presence in training and a great team man too. And he cost the club only his wages, about £15,000 a week, and signing-on fee.

Unfortunately his brilliance only highlights the deficiencies in the rest of the Chelsea side. On the other hand David Ginola, Tony Yeboah and Brian Roy have all added a verve and vivacity to good sides such as Newcastle, Leeds and Nottingham Forest.

But two of the unsung overseas heroes are Blackburn's Henning Berg and Peter Ndlovu of Coventry. Berg is one of the Premiership's most reliable defenders, a championship winner, Norway's Footballer of the Year and he cost only £400,000.

Ndlovu was signed at the age of 17 by John Sillett from Bulawayo Highlanders for £10,000. He may not score as many goals as he should but his pace and trickery have been alarming defences for five seasons now.

There is, too, a batch of goalkeepers who have saved their best for England: Bosnich, Miklosko and until recently Grobbelaar, Segers and Thorstvedt.

And then there is Dimitri Kharine. Chelsea have done well with foreigners. On his day Kharine, who cost only £400,000, is one of the best goalkeepers in Europe. And in the £306,000 Erland Johnsen they have another of the most consistently reliable defenders in the Premiership.

The jury is still out on imports such as Bergkamp, Degryse, Milosevic and Isaias. But if they fail to make it, they will not be the first Premiership flops.

Most are long gone but one of the most expensive remains. Ilie Dumitrescu joined Tottenham for £2.7 million along with Klinsmann-mania. But whereas the German was a classy, wholehearted and shining success, the Romanian has posed and pouted his way into Tottenham reserves, where he is still struggling to come to terms with the English requirementto chase back and work hard.

And then there is Marco Boogers. He joined West Ham, moaned about not immmediately getting in the first team, eventually came on as a substitute, was almost immediately sent off, fled home to Holland and had to be sweet-talked back.

Overall, though, the good times have outweighed the bad in this uniquely mixed marriage of Premiership and ex-pats. Foreign players have brought glamour, their goals always seem so spectacular, their touch and technique shamefully remind the British game how far it has to catch up and, as Juninho will prove this afternoon, they can light up a whole community.

Premiership's overseas players

Arsenal Glenn Helder John Jensen Dennis Bergkamp	**Aston Villa** Mark Bosnich Savo Milosevic Dwight Yorke•	**Blackburn** Henning Berg Lars Bohinen Frank Talia	**Bolton** Fabian De Freitas Richard Sneekes Gudni Bergsson Sasa Curcic Mixu Paatelainen•
Chelsea Dimitri Kharine Jakob Kjeldbjerg Ruud Gullit Erland Johnsen•	**Coventry** Peter Ndlovu Carlos Batista John Filan Nii Lamptey Isaias Soares	**Everton** Daniel Amokachi Andrei Kanchelskis Jason Kearton• Anders Limpar•	**Leeds** Lucas Radebe Phil Masinga Tony Yeboah Kevin Sharp
Liverpool Michael Stensgaard Stig Bjornebye Jan Molby•	**Man City** Michael Vonk Uwe Rosler Eike Immel Georgi Kinkladze Kaare Ingebrigtsen	**Man Utd** Peter Schmeichel Eric Cantona	**M'borough** Salif Bagayoko Jaime Moreno Jan Aage Fjortoft Juninho
Newcastle Pavel Srnicek Marc Hottiger Philippe Albert David Ginola	**Nottm Forest** Alf-Inge Haaland Bryan Roy Andrea Silenzi	**QPR** Sieb Dykstra Juergen Sommer Ned Zelic Gregory Goodridge Andrew McDermott	**Sheff Wed** Klas Ingesson Dan Petrescu Marc Degryse Darko Kovacevic * Dejan Stefanovic *
S'thampton Ken Monkou• Bruce Grobbelaar•	**Tottenham** Ilie Dumitrescu Ronny Rosenthal• Erik Thorstvedt•	**West Ham** Marco Boogers Anthony Feuer Stan Lazaridis Marc Rieper Ludek Miklosko•	**Wimbledon** Oyvind Leonhardsen Hans Segers•

• Resident in the UK for 5 years, not regarded as non-UK players under FA Premier League Rule B 10.

* Awaiting work permit

A N Other

WHETHER bowling along the fast-medium lane or keeping to the inside, this versatile Mancunian regularly kept himself busy from the mid-Sixties to the mid-Seventies. When he was not leaping and diving from Merseyside to Midlands to Sandgrounders he was measuring his length in the cause of pears sable, roses red and feathers Welsh. He also kept logs in Oregon.

Last week: Tony Brown (WBA).

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Le Tissier given carrot and stick

Russell Thomas

MATTHEW Le Tissier has strengthened his bond with Southampton by signing a new contract keeping him at The Dell until he is 30, despite strong criticism of his slump in form.

According to the club's director of football Lawrie McMenemy, it took only 30 minutes for Le Tissier to make his long-term commitment — a decision, Southampton hope, that will discourage interest by the likes of Chelsea and Blackburn.

The new deal, embracing a 12-month extension to the three-year contract he signed in 1994, also offers a lucrative testimonial for the Channel Islander who joined Southampton 11 years ago.

Le Tissier has almost certainly kept the opt-out clause allowing him to leave if Southampton lose Premiership status — though their captain will not hear of relegation. The deal amounts to a mutual vote of confidence after Le Tissier's decline in form this season, reaching the low point of his recent sending-off against Liverpool.

As Le Tissier said: "It's nice to know they are sticking by me. I've played 13 games, scored five goals and made eight so far this season, which I know doesn't sound too bad statistically. But I realise I'm not at my best.

"I've had two very good years and there was bound to be a slump in my form at some point — it happens to everyone."

The proposed £500,000 transfer of Barcelona's Thomas Christiansen to Manchester City has ended in acrimony, with Alan Ball calling the young striker "greedy". Ball said the Spanish Under-21 player's wage demands were "absolutely ridiculous".

Regi Blinker, the Feyenoord winger whose goal knocked Everton out of Europe, says he would welcome a move to Blackburn if Ray Harford converts his recent inquiry into an offer. "I'd be happy to join them," said the Dutchman, thought to be available for £1.3 million.

Millwall have escaped FA punishment over the incident involving two fans, one allegedly threatening the goalkeeper Kevin Pressman, at the Coca-Cola Cup tie with Sheffield Wednesday.

Both fans have been banned by Millwall for life from the New Den and will also appear in court later this month.

The FA said: "We are satisfied the club responded positively to the incident and acted swiftly against the individuals involved."

Hearts look to Continent to halt drift

Patrick Glenn

AT THE end of a week in which Raith Rovers were the only British side to score a goal in European football, Hearts turned to the Continent in their attempts to push themselves off the bottom of the Premier Division.

Pasqual Bruno, a 32-year-old former Juventus, Torino and Fiorentina central defender, and Hans Eskilsson, an international striker from the Swedish club Vasalunds, have been taken on trial and may face Partick Thistle at Tynecastle this afternoon.

Bruno played more than 200 Serie A matches and won a Uefa Cup winner's medal when Juventus beat Fiorentina in the 1990 final and has one cap for Italy. Eskilsson, 28, has played eight times for Sweden and was formerly with Sporting Lisbon. The two latest signings join the French goalkeeper Gilles Rousset, who arrived at Tynecastle from Rennes two weeks ago.

The bleakness of Hearts' circumstances — no money for transfer fees and mounting debt — has left their manager Jim Jefferies trawling the continent for bargains. Bruno and Eskilsson at least seem likely to add a few to this afternoon's gate.

Rangers will doubtless have another huge crowd at Ibrox for the visit of Falkirk — 33,000 season tickets see to that — but they will see a team damaged by injury. The goalkeeper Andy Goram will be missing for two weeks, the full-backs Stephen Wright and David Robertson likewise and Brian Laudrup continues to be absent.

Now their captain Richard Gough and the midfielder Paul Gascoigne seem likely to be added to the casualty list as a result of a knee injury and thigh damage respectively. Both will be examined this morning but Walter Smith is unlikely to risk either.

The manager has been consoled by the return of Alan McLaren, Alex Cleian and Gordon Durie. All were suspended for this week's defeat by Juventus.

TEAM SHEET

Arsenal v Manchester U

England captain David Platt is to play in his first full game for Arsenal since a knee operation two months ago, with Ray Parlour or Martin Keown likely to make way. Alex Ferguson, aiming to celebrate his ninth anniversary as manager by extending United's Premiership run to four matches, names an unchanged team.

Chelsea v Sheffield Wed

Glenn Hoddle has injury worries over Steve Clarke, Gavin Peacock and Scott Minto while Frank Sinclair starts a three-match ban. Nigel Spackman is available. Wednesday's Belgian forward Marc Degryse has recovered from a foot injury, while Lee Briscoe and Andy Pearce are back after knee injuries.

Coventry v Tottenham

Coventry manager Ron Atkinson has defenders Brian Borrows and Ally Pickering, midfielder Isaias and strikers Nii Lamptey and Peter Ndlovu under treatment. David Burrows (hamstring), is available. Jason Dozzell (ankle) is doubtful for Spurs.

Manchester City v Bolton

City manager Alan Ball, seeking a first Premiership win in the 12th game of the season, has Garry Flitcroft (ankle) fit but Terry Phelan and Peter Beagrie injured. Bolton manager Roy McFarland keeps faith with the players who beat Arsenal 1-0 on Monday as his side search for their first away point this season.

Middlesbrough v Leeds

Juninho will make his English bow but manager Bryan Robson is refusing to say whom he will replace. Full-back Neil Cox will have a late test on a hamstring injury and striker John Hendrie (groin) is out. Leeds are again without Tony Dorigo and Gary Speed (ankle) is doubtful.

Newcastle v Liverpool

Newcastle recall midfielder Lee Clark, who has recovered from Achilles tendon trouble, and striker Les Ferdinand is fit after a foot injury, but manager Kevin Keegan will make a late check on left-back John Beresford (ankle). Liverpool are likely to be unchanged but manager Roy Evans must choose between Rob Jones or Jason McAteer at right-back to counter the threat of Ginola.

Southampton v QPR

Jim Magilton is in the Southampton squad after recovering from a blood clot in his leg. Neil Maddison (knee) returns as does midfielder David Hughes (back). Australian Ned Zelic is set for his first Premiership start for QPR after recovering from a virus. Captain Alan McDonald, who has missed the last four games through injury, is in an 18-man squad.

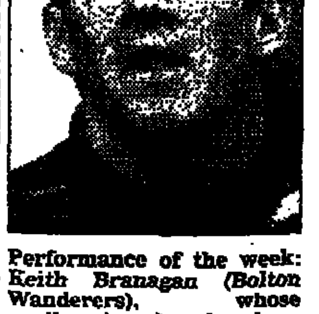
West Ham v Aston Villa

West Ham manager Harry Redknapp — for once free from injury worries — has named the side which won 1-0 at Sheffield Wednesday last week. Paul McGrath returns to Villa's defence in the only change to the side which overcame Everton last week as new signing Carl Tiler (hamstring) is out.

TOMORROW

Everton v Blackburn

Manager Joe Royle hopes Andrei Kanchelskis will help Everton overcome their disappointing European defeat against Feyenoord. Injury worries over Vinny Samways (hamstring). Earl Barrett (knee) and Anders Limpar (ankle) remain. Graham Le Saux (ankle) may get a recall for Rovers after coming on as a substitute against Legia Warsaw in the European Cup Winners' Cup. But Graham Fenton, yet to complete his £1.5 million move from Aston Villa, and £1.7 million midfielder Billy McKinlay are doubtful.



Performance of the week: *Keith Branagan (Bolton Wanderers),* whose goalkeeping played such an important part in Monday's win against Arsenal.

Who's more truly blue?
Soccer Diary
W

Who's more truly blue?

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

WHAT is the difference between a Manchester City fanzine and a porn magazine? No, this is not a joke. The City fanzine Electic Blue has been forced to change its name after a legal threat from the publishers of Electric Blue, the porn magazine.

Amazingly they accused the fanzine editor Noel Bayley of trying to pass off his Electric Blue as their Electric Blue.

Jokes about City not having a lot up front aside, surely it would need a vivid imagination to mistake a publication with a City player on the front for one with a naked woman.

As Noel says: "The whole thing is ludicrous. One of my mates suggested the name and, when we had a vote in the pub, it won."

But Noel is in no mood for a legal challenge. "I'm buying a house and I've had enough of solicitors."

So in return for the porn magazine dropping their claim for damages, Noel has agreed to stop publication of his Electric Blue.

He will continue to publish a fanzine though, but with a different name — "Bert Trautmann's Helmet". Surely no other magazine is called that.

BETTING really is a mug's game. "The bet to be on in this game is the draw rather than the away win, for a reason that will become clear," counselled the Sporting Life last Saturday morning. "One method which has worked reasonably well in recent years is to look for fixtures which have not produced a home win in at least five playings, provided all of those were within the previous 10 seasons. The Torquay v Scunthorpe game satisfies both conditions."

Scunthorpe were satisfied anyway. They won 8-1.

INCIDENTALLY, asks Eddie Curran of Middlesbrough, is there any truth in the rumour that Alan Ball is about to make a bid for a Scunthorpe player? Manchester City's Knill has a certain ring about it.

SOMEONE on a Middlesbrough newspaper has blown up the photograph of Juninho signing his contract at the Riverside Stadium. It shows that he is actually signing an application form for the southern branch of the Middlesbrough supporters club.

TIME OUT, the London listings magazine, features a Quotes of the Week section. This week's edition contains: "I don't know why it was £140,500. Maybe it was a conversion of a round figure . . . I felt like ringing him and asking, 'Are we £9,500 short here?'." The quote is credited to "Graham Taylor on his surprise bung from Rune Hauge". What you might call an unsolicited gaffe.

BRAZILIAN newspapers this week published photographs claiming to show Flamengo's controversial striker Edmundo pointing to his genitals in response to fans barracking him throughout last Sunday's derby game against his former club Vasco da Gama.

However, the fiery forward — nicknamed The Animal and linked with Newcastle — has denied the allegations. "My conscience is clear. I always put my hand on my groin when I'm warming up," he said. "I was just stretching."

HERE is an idea should Manchester United need an excuse for another kit change. "Your good pair of shorts ought to have a pocket of some kind," according to an article called "You and your playing kit" which appeared in the FA Annual for 1951-2. It explains: "You may go to a match in a jacket in which you risk leaving you busfare or even a toffee, but there is one thing you should have during a game — a handkerchief. You may need this for blowing your nose, or you may need it for getting dirt out of your eye or wiping away the manly sweat from your brow, or even blood from a wound." Oh, such days.

SO THAT brings an end to the Manchester City jokes, does it? Okay, go on then. Q: What is the time in Liverpool? A: Ten past Immel.

Two down . . . Andrew and Ryan watch Newcastle lose at London Scottish and hope the 120-day wait before they can play themselves will be abolished PHOTOGRAPH: KEN BROWN

Ryan on Tyne for the revolution

Jill Turner finds Rob Andrew's first recruit at Newcastle eager for the challenge of taking the club into the next millennium

TWO things are preying on Dean Ryan's mind as he prepares to take up his new post as assistant director of rugby, player and coach at Newcastle Rugby Football Club Ltd.

He fears that Geordie sociability will see him balloon in weight and he worries that, as drink loosens heavily accented tongues, he will be unable to understand a word anyone says.

One thing not preying on the 29-year-old forward's mind is his ignominious departure from Wasps, the club he captained for four years. Nor is he concerned at the battles to come with rugby's old guard as he and his former team-mate Rob Andrew struggle to take the newly professional sport into the next millennium.

Ryan shrugs off accusations of poaching in Newcastle's acquisitions from Wasps, from Scotland and regarding Leicester's Tony Underwood.

"The Rugby Football Union are hoping this will all go away and it won't. I didn't want to see the team I played with break up but now the environment has been created there is no point in ignoring it. Players are now in an era where they are worth X thousand pounds and they will go where they can improve their lifestyle or career.

"Wasps won't be the last place to be hit and the threat is not only from Newcastle because other clubs are going to have to get their act together and compete. Newcastle have Sir John Hall but I'm sure everyone is running round trying to find someone to back them financially and not only from the point of view of acquiring or holding on to players. Ground redevelopment is important. You can't house people in 3,000-seater temporary stands and expect to compete but only Leicester among the First Division clubs has a ground of professional status."

Ryan hopes to learn from the long-professional, money-spinning Newcastle FC who are alongside the rugby club under the umbrella of Hall's vision of a Euro-style organisation. Athletics, motor sport, basketball and ice hockey will also be included under a five-year plan for the Newcastle United Sporting Club.

In line with soccer, Ryan predicts the introduction of foreign players into British rugby clubs, transfer fees, high-tech grounds and facilities, supporters' shops and celebrity players marketed to the public — even named shirts — and featured on the showbiz pages of the tabloid press. He wants consistent refereeing and an all-action, running style of play to maintain spectators' interest.

"Any games you can watch on TV at the moment, even if you have so-called stars on the field, are not appealing. We need to be more spectator-friendly, as they are in the southern hemisphere, where the referees will encourage positive play rather than sticking to the letter of the law. Players will have to be brave enough to play with ball in hand instead of being frightened of it in case they make a mistake. We cannot just throw the sport out on TV and say: 'This is rugby. You must like it.'"

But before he and Andrew can concentrate on the new-look club, there is a more pressing problem. Newcastle Gosforth, currently at the foot of League Two, are facing relegation and Ryan, Andrew and the other new signings are banned from playing for their new club under the 120-day transfer rule. The club are hoping that introducing them for the last few games of the season will be enough to keep them up.

Ryan said: "We are still hopeful that the rule will be removed but, even if it stays, we still have a number of people able to play the last six league games, including me, Rob, Nick Popplewell, Tony [Underwood] and Graham Childs, and we would be hoping to win four or five of them and avoid the drop."

He is coy about rumours of more League One players making the move North-east for those crucial last few games — "I'm not directly involved and I've not been party to any conversations" — and about Andrew's reason for picking him as lieutenant — "You'll have to ask him."

He is leaving his Berkshire-based post at Beneficial Bank, which has embarrassingly close links with Wasps, at the end of this month to move north with his wife Wendy and their two young children. "I'm keen to get started, if not playing then just as part of a team. I want to get on with the job of getting Newcastle up into the First Division."

He is still hurt at his treatment by Wasps, where four of his seven years were as captain, and said his appearance at a post-dismissal game was because he was involved in a Beneficial Bank hospitality and sponsorship arrangement and had to be there.

"It was both Rob's and my intention to carry on playing till February in line with the 120-day rule. I was disappointed at the way things finished. At some stage we would have had to go but would have finished playing on a Saturday and ended up with a bit of a party afterwards. To be summoned into a committee room on a Thursday night, told we were no longer required and sent out one door while the team went out another was a sad way to end it. I think in a couple of years it will be regretted."

Part of his new job will be to draw in youngsters from the North-east and nurture talent to provide a pool of future players, something soccer clubs have long exploited with apprenticeship schemes and armies of talent scouts.

"We have a huge catchment area. If you can establish a large input from schools and universities you can capture a lot of talent and hopefully see some dividends from that fairly quickly.

"In the past Newcastle has suffered heavily from the drift of talent to the south, largely due to the increased employment prospects there. With professionalism removing that threat, we want to convince them to channel their energies into this very ambitious club."

Cricket

Extra time gained

Edward Harris in East London

JOHN CRAWLEY will be given the chance to grab the winner today when England go into extra-time here against Border.

Yesterday's second day was abandoned because overnight rain had turned the outfield into a paddy field. The last three playing days of the tour have provided only 69 overs and the England management is getting concerned

With only six playing days before the first Test, the six pace bowlers have delivered 46 overs in first-class cricket on tour with three — Darren Gough, Dominic Cork and Peter Martin — yet to mark out their run-ups.

The team manager Ray Illingworth has asked for extra playing time here, a request which was granted yesterday by the South African board which has agreed to add an extra 30 minutes to each end of the last two days.

If conditions permit, Crawley will resume this morning 13 short of what would be his first century for England, who were 218 for four overnight in their first innings.

● South Africa officials have denied snubbing Basil D'Oliveira in the run up to England's first Test against the Springboks in South Africa for 30 years. South Africa refused entry to D'Oliveira before England's tour 27 years ago, leading to a worldwide sporting ban, and he claimed he had been ignored for the celebrations surrounding England's return.

But Ali Bacher, the managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, said: "We would be delighted to see Dolly . . . If he does come he will be given VIP treatment."

Hussain leads England A to second win

THE England A captain Nasser Hussain led his team to their second successive tour victory, a seven-run defeat of the Pakistan Cricket Board XI in Thatta yesterday. Hussain's innings of 64 was the backbone of his team's total of 168 all out off 44.3 overs.

That seemingly modest total proved beyond the scope of the Pakistani side, who were bowled out for 161 with eight balls remaining of a match reduced from 50 to 45 overs after a heavy overnight dew delayed the start at the Makli Cricket Ground.

Middlesex's Jason Pooley was out in the fourth over for one but the Yorkshire opener Andrew McGrath and Hussain repaired the damage with a second-wicket stand of 71 in 96 minutes, the Essex player's second tour 50 coming off 76 balls.

With prolific batsmen, Ghulam Ali, Ejaz Ahmed Jnr, Mahmood Hamid and Zafar Iqbal, in their line-up, the PCB side looked favourites to win. But only the opener Mohammad Ramzan, who top-scored with 34, put up a fight.

ICC criticises Salim inquiry

THE ICC is to seek greater powers over cases such as the Salim Malik bribery affair. Its chairman Sir Clyde Walcott described as "most unfortunate" the case judge's decision to make public the full text of the Pakistan Cricket Board inquiry, in particular the claims that the allegations made by the three Australian players appeared to have been concocted.

Yesterday Salim was out for seven as Pakistan made 199 for five on the second day of their four-day match against South Australia in Adelaide.

Wigan watch helps Bath make waves

Robert Armstrong on the new drills used by the leaders to punch holes in defences

NO DOUBT the Bath coaching staff permitted themselves a wry smile when Cardiff made rugby union's first paid-for transfer from league with this week's signing of Jonathan Davies.

If Cardiff are planning to use Davies's unique skills to break the deadlock of safety-first rugby, they would be well advised to consult Bath, who have been using rugby league drills with devastating effect this season.

During the past two months Bath have averaged more than 50 points a game at the Recreation Ground, a reflection of their fine-tuned ability to keep the ball alive and score six or seven tries against respectable League One opponents. In contrast Cardiff, the Welsh champions, have been finding tries hard to come by, a shortcoming that could prove costly now that bonus points are awarded for tries in the Heineken League.

Clearly Davies, whose tactical sophistication has been refined by years of league training with Widnes and Warrington, has much to offer Cardiff as a potential coach as well as a playmaker. Brian Ashton, the Bath coach who attends Wigan's home games whenever time allows, has a sharp appreciation of rugby league skills and drills which have been integrated into the club's twice-weekly training sessions.

"Last summer I sat down and took a hard look at the way the game was developing in Courage League One," says Ashton, a cheerful Lancastrian whose flat vowels would fit snugly into the 13-man code. "Despite everyone's protestations last season the expansive game they said they wanted to play did not materialise, apart from very rare occasions.

"I analysed how you could play an expansive union game without sacrificing basic principles of attacking play, such as going forward, providing close support and creating continuity. I looked at rugby league to find out how tactics had developed, bearing in mind that league players always have a 10-metre advantage in which to attack from the re-start.

"In addition league players know when they are tackled they won't lose the ball — unless it's the sixth tackle — which offers a safety valve not available in union. After studying both codes closely I worked out a series of drills more allied to league than to union which we put into practice with the whole squad."

Ashton's new approach placed extra emphasis on individual decision-making among all 15 players geared to producing maximum continuity. "We have begun to see the benefits of our new approach in league games," explained Ashton. "We work not so much in terms of specific moves but rather from a general concept of how we want to play the game.

"Our goal is not to be satisfied with a one-wave attack, which is something you see too often in rugby union. When such an attack fails the whole side comes to a standstill. Instead you must aim to sustain wave after wave of attack. There are no backs and no forwards. Instead everyone is a rugby player engaged in non-stop running."

If the Ashton regime sounds like hard, exhausting work, the consolation for the players is that training sessions have become shorter and more enjoyable, rarely lasting more than 80 minutes. Indeed the constant upbeat tempo bears a strong resemblance to the training style of the All Blacks or the Brazil soccer team, both of whom value continuous possession above all else.

The bonus for Bath is that players like Jeremy Guscott and Ben Clarke, who did not do themselves justice in the World Cup, have been playing at the top of their form and regularly scoring tries. "Relative newcomers like Kevin Yates have also fitted easily into the pattern," says Ashton. "He is a footballer first and a prop forward second."

Hill approaches old team-mates

RICHARD HILL, the former Bath scrum-half, has admitted he is trying to woo players away from his former club to Gloucester where he is now coaching director, *writes Ian Malin*.

The England full-back Jon Callard, the Scotland No. 8 Eric Peters and the reserve fly-half Richard Butland are believed to be three of the players approached by Hill, who recently left Bath in acrimonious circumstances.

Hill said: "I cannot deny that we have spoken to one or two Bath players with a view to them joining us. But suggestions that we have offered £25,000 to each player, or any sum of money, are not true at all."

David Pears, the Harlequins fly-half who is on the England bench against South Africa in a fortnight's time, misses today's league visit of Leicester. He has not recovered from the ankle injury he sustained in a collision with Bath's Mike Catt a fortnight ago.

Leicester are to break with 70 years of tradition by replacing the letters on their shirts with numbers. Bristol will be the only leading club to use letters.

Results

Golf

ALFRED DUNHILL MASTERS (Jakarta): **Second round** (GB/Ire unless stated): **131** C Parry (Aus) 66, 65. **134** M Campbell (NZ) 69, 65. **135** C Gray (Aus) 69, 66; G Chalmers (Aus) 68 67. **136** M Gronberg (Swe) 66, 70. **137** E Droop (Aus) 68, 69; M Mouland 70, 67; G Joyner (Aus) 69, 68. **Selected: 139** I Woosnam 67, 72. **141** S Struver (Ger) 75, 66. **142** W Grady (Aus) 72, 70. **143** J van de Velde (Fr) 70, 73. **144** V Singh (Fiji) 72, 72. **Missed cut: 147** A Cejka (Ger) 72, 75. **149** R Muntz (Neth) 76, 73. **150** I Baker-Finch (Aus) 73, 77. **151** B Jackson 77, 74.

KAPALUA INTERNATIONAL (Hawaii): **First round** (US unless stated): **65** D Clark (N Ire); J Furyk; M Standly. **66** G McGord; R Lohr; B Lane (Eng); J McGovern, J Adams. **67** L Clements; R Maltbie; R Cochran; J Pate; T Lehman; J Schroeder; B Crenshaw; B Chamblee; H Twitty; M Dawson; M Heinen. **68** H Irwin; G Waite (NZ); P Jacobsen; F Couples; B Lyle (Scot); K Triplett; G Borge. **69** D Stockton Jr; D Love III; W Andrade; N Henke; B McCallister; B Claar; J D Blake.

Tennis

PARIS OPEN: Quarter-finals: J Courier (US) bt M Chang 6-2, 7-6; **W Ferreira** (SA) bt D Vacek (Cz) 6-2, 6-4; **P Sampras** (US) bt J Hlasek (Switz) 6-2, 6-3.

BELL CHALLENGE WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT (Quebec City). **Second round: S Sabatini-McCarthy** (Neth) bt M Tu (US) 6-2, 6-4; **R Stubbs** (Aus) bt L Raymond (US) 3-6, 7-5, 7-6; **L Lee** (US) bt N Tauziat 6-2, 4-6, 7-6; **J Halard-Decugis** (Fr) bt A Miller (US) 6-3, 7-6, **S Tested** (Fr) bt V Ruano-Pascual (Sp) 6-1, 6-1.

BRITISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Telford): **Men: Quarter-finals: G Rusedski** (Jmca) bt L Milligan (Mdx) 6-4, 6-2; **M Petshey** (Essex) bt C Beecher (Kent) 6-4, 4-6, 6-3; **T Newman** (Oxon) bt J Delgado (Warwicks) 6-3, 6-3. **Doubles: Semi-finals: M Blackgrove/A Richardson** (West of Scotland/Lincs) bt P Hand/G Henderson (Berks/Yorks) 6-3, 4-6, 6-8; **J Bates/T Hewitson** (Surrey/Oxon) bt T Spinks/C Beecher (Norfolk/Kent) 6-1, 6-2. **Women: Semi-finals: S Smith** (Essex) bt J Durie (Avon) 5-7, 6-1, 6-4. **Doubles: Semi-final: J Pullin/L Woodroffe** (Sussex/Surrey) bt J Durie/C Wood (Avon/Sussex) 6-2, 7-5.

BANK OF THE WEST CLASSIC (Oakland, Calif): **Second round: L Wild** (US) bt P Shriver (US) 6-7, 7-5, 7-6; **A Sugiyama** (Japan) bt I Spirlea (Rom) 6-4, 4-6, 6-1; **L Davenport** (US) bt T Whitlinger-Jones (US) 7-5, 6-1.

Cricket

TOUR MATCH: Adelaide (second day): South Australia first innings total 302-8 dec. Pakistan first innings 199-5. **Thatta:** England A 168 (N Hussain 64; Kabir Khan 4-20). Pakistan Cricket Board XI 161. England A won by 7 runs **Hyderabad:** New Zealand first innings 454-4 dec. Indian Colts XI first innings 180.

SHEFFIELD SHIELD: Melbourne: Victoria 159 (M Elliot 53; Matthews 4-52) and 241. New South Wales 344 (M Taylor 126, S Waugh 90, M Bevan 44no; Warne 5-122) and 58-4. New South Wales won by six wickets. **Hobart** (second day): Tasmania 458-2 dec (D Hills 220no, R Ponting 118no, D Boon 88). Queensland 0-0.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Ottawa 5, Hartford 0; Detroit 6, Boston 5 (ot); Florida 2, Philadelphia 1; Los Angeles 5, NY Rangers 3; New Jersey 3, San Jose 3 (ot).

Hockey

AZLAN SHAH TOURNAMENT (Kuala Lumpur): **Fifth series:** India 1, Spain 0; Malaysia 2, New Zealand 3; Germany 1, Canada 0. **Final group standings:** 1, Germany 9; 2, India 7, 3, Canada 4. (Tomorrow's final: Germany v India).

● Peter Nicol, the last squash player to beat Jansher Khan in a tournament, has the best British chance of reaching the semi-finals of the World Open which starts in Nicosia, Cyprus, on Monday, *writes Richard Jago*. The left-handed Scot, who overcame the great Pakistani at the Laeskes Welsh Classic 21 months ago, is seeded to meet him again in the last four on Friday. But Jansher, who is hoping to achieve a record, is overwhelming favourite to win. If he does so again he will surpass the achievement of six titles he currently shares with his unrelated namesake Jahangir Khan.

Gymnastics

Thomas calls it a day at 27

Sarah Baldwin

NEIL THOMAS, Britain's most successful gymnast, announced his retirement yesterday at the age of 27. His decision brings to an end a remarkable career that brought international recognition to a country that had struggled to keep up with the leaders, let alone win medals.

At the 1990 European Championships Thomas won bronze on the vault, ending Britain's 30-year medal drought. That year he also won Commonwealth gold on the floor and became the first British gymnast to be invited to compete in the World Cup. In the 1991 World Championships he qualified for the floor final.

In the Birmingham World Championships in 1993 he won the silver medal on floor and, to prove it was neither fluke nor home advantage, he repeated the feat a year later in Brisbane where his 16th overall world placing was the highest ever for a British gymnast.

Sport in brief

Boxing

The British bantamweight champion Drew Docherty has decided to carry on fighting after the death of his most recent opponent James Murray, who was fatally injured in a title fight in Glasgow on October 13. His next fight is likely to be for the European title against London's Johnny Armour in February.

Basketball

Panathinaikos have been fined nearly £23,000 after their supporters threw coins on to the court injuring a coach during last week's European champion clubs match against Real Madrid.

Cricket

The former Hampshire captain Mark Nicholas, who retired at the end of last season, has been named player of the year by the county's supporters.

Rowing

Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent lead off the 500-boat Fullers Head of the River Fours from Mortlake to Putney time trial today in a Leander quadruple with James Cracknell and Bobby Thatcher, *writes Christopher Dodd*. Britain's silver medal coxless four of Greg and Jonny Searle, Tim Foster and Rupert Obholzer are among the new entries.

Motorcycling

The Italian team Ducati has signed the British rider Neil Hodgson for the 1996 world superbike championship.

Swimming

Jessica Foschi, a 15-year-old, tested positive for steroids at the US national championships in August and has been put on probation for two years by United States Swimming, the governing body.

Motor Racing

JJ Lehto, the winner of the Le Mans 24-hour race in June, walked away unhurt from a 175mph crash in Zhuhai, China, yesterday. His factory Toyota GT sports-car suffered brake failure on the Zhuhai street circuit where the final round of the international endurance GT championship is being staged this weekend.

Race Walking

Sheffield's 23-year-old Vicky Lupton, who was fifth at the last Commonwealth Games, has become British athletics' first selection for next summer's Atlanta Olympic Games after achieving the 10km qualifying standard.

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SportsGuardian

The European Court is urged to reject adviser's preliminary ruling on the Bosman case for the sake of the moral health of the EU's youth

Uefa united in last-ditch challenge

David Lacey

EUROPEAN football yesterday asked the Court of Justice in Luxembourg not to risk dealing a mortal blow to the game's structure in the European Union.

In an open letter, signed by 49 presidents of the national associations including England's Sir Bert Millichip, the European Football Union (Uefa) also pleaded for a retention of the present restrictions on foreign players, arguing that this kept up international strengths and prevented the wealthiest clubs monopolising the best talent.

Six weeks ago Carl Otto Lenz, a chief legal adviser at the European Court, ruled that transfer fees for players whose contracts had expired were illegal, along with restrictions on foreign imports within the EU.

His decision was the result of Jean-Marc Bosman's five-year struggle to establish that he should have had the right to move to the French club Dunkerque from RFC Liège, in his native Belgium, once he was out of contract. In an echo of the George Eastham case in England Liège offered him a new deal at a quarter of his previous salary, then slapped on a transfer fee Dunkerque could not afford.

Yesterday Uefa said it doubted if the EU fully appreciated the significance of Lenz's ruling, which will soon become European law unless the Court of Justice can be persuaded to think again. Bosman's case, it argued, arose not because of the present transfer system but because Liège had failed to observe the transfer regulations. In England Bosman could simply have gone to an independent transfer tribunal.

Uefa poured scorn on Lenz's suggestion that, to compensate smaller clubs for the loss of earnings from selling players, the rich should give to the poor. "The concept that a handful of big clubs in each nation should simply give away a large percentage of their income to support the mass of middle and smaller clubs, with nothing in return, is simply not practicable."

Whatever happens, clubs will still receive fees for players who move before their contracts are up but Uefa warned that the effect of dismantling even part of the system, along with ending the rule that limits teams in European competitions to three overseas and two assimilated (ie naturalised) players, would have threefold repercussions.

European football would become divided administratively between EU and non-EU countries, including those in the former Communist bloc. The gap between rich and poor would become even wider, with hundreds of clubs folding or going part-time. And clubs would lose the incentive to develop talent that could then be sold on, reducing opportunities for gifted youngsters to become professional footballers.

> 'Hundreds of young people will abandon the game and return to the streets'

"Hundreds of young people, without facilities and without the dream of moving steadily up through the levels of football to the top, will abandon the game and return to the streets, with all the social consequences that can bring," Uefa claimed.

Remembering some of the wonderful players the streets have produced in the past the argument is a trifle ambivalent. Nevertheless, Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive, emphasised this aspect of Uefa's case.

"The implications are very serious for football right across Europe," Kelly said. "The smaller and medium-sized clubs would no longer provide youth development programmes.

"At the moment we have the agreement of the players' unions to operate the present transfer system, and there is simply no problem."

Kelly believes there is a case for a special clause in the European treaty which recognises that sport "is not like any other economic activity". Uefa is hoping to persuade the European Court that amendments to the transfer system at present being discussed with the European Players' Union will suffice.

While the Scottish FA is equally convinced that abolishing such large areas of the transfer system would put its smaller clubs out of business, Rangers have stepped out of line on foreigners.

The champions have been lobbying Uefa to end restrictions on overseas players, a campaign that might meet with approving nods from Manchester United, who were severely handicapped in the Champions' League last season by not being able to field their strongest team.

Yesterday Jim Farry, the SFA's chief executive, predicted that, if this happened, Rangers would finish up as small fry in Europe. "If our champions believe that scrapping the foreigner rule will bring them more success in Europe, they are ill-judged," he said.

"There would simply be more powerful clubs in Portugal, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland and so on. The big fish in a wee pool syndrome could rapidly become a wee fish in a big pool."

Farry added that he had cautioned Rangers about this and advised them "very seriously about the ramifications".

Uefa Cup draw, page 10

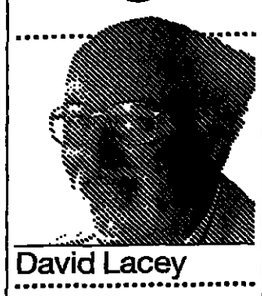
JANES' FIGHTING DAUGHTER

Amanda's week of success is finally hit by Wood

AT the outset Amanda Janes' aim was to qualify but yesterday the 17-year-old, whose mother Christine (Truman) played the 1961 Wimbledon singles final, finally bowed out of the national championships at Telford, beaten 6-3, 6-3 in the semi-finals by the No. 1 seed Clare Wood, *writes David Irvine.* Her week's winnings total £2,200.

Report, page 9

Hallowed turf birthplace of English kings



David Lacey

ASSUMING that Prince Charles eventually ascends the throne it is a safe bet that the coronation of King Charles III will take place in Westminster Abbey. Yet surely, in this day and age, there is a case for an alternative value.

All abbeys are old but Westminster is older than most, and its accessibility by car is limited. Public transport is good but there could be problems in the event of a Tube strike.

Why not switch the ceremony to, say, Winchester, which may be ancient but has easy motorway access? Or Coventry, an all-seater cathedral wired for sound? Or Liverpool and run the risk of someone nicking the state coach?

Of course the argument is superfluous because no one can imagine a monarch being crowned at anywhere other than Westminster. Similarly nobody who follows football can conceive of the FA Cup final and the biggest England fixtures being played anywhere else except Wembley.

This is why, throughout the debate concerning a new English national stadium to be funded by National Lottery money, the football side of the argument has amounted to little more than words for the sake of words. Wembley may be a raddled septuagenarian desperately trying to disguise its age with heavy make-up but its place in the nation's soccer psyche is unassailable.

FROM Billy, the white horse, to Bobby Moore, the golden vision, Wembley has touched the English game's heart. To appreciate what Wembley means to football people it is necessary to scan the enraptured faces of those who turn up on Cup final day, especially if they belong to supporters of teams like Coventry or Ipswich who rarely pass this way more than once.

Last season the final of the Auto Windscreens Shield drew more than 76,000 to Wembley and 26,000 of them came from Carlisle. Even if stadiums of similar capacity had been available elsewhere in the country the game would not have attracted an attendance of comparable size.

For, apart from tradition, Wembley has the priceless asset of being in London, and this is why the nation's biggest football matches will continue to be played there. The soul of the English game may reside in the North, but Wembley stole its heart long ago.

THE Commonwealth Games might show that there is more to Manchester than the Rovers Return and the World Student Games survived Sheffield's passing impersonation of Pompeii, but London and cup finals are indivisable.

Obviously Wembley has to be rebuilt; for all the millions spent on it the place still brings the airship's shadow to the space age. But whatever happens to the stadium its future is inexorably tied to the future of English football.

However, this should not mean that when the Football Association's present contract with Wembley — which obliges it to stage England games there (give or take one-offs like the Umbro Cup match against Sweden at Leeds) until 2002 — expires something of equal exclusivity should take its place.

England now has some of the world's finest football stadiums and the national team ought to be able to exploit them, especially as Wembley is becoming blasé about run-of-the-mill friendlies.

The goalless draw with Colombia in September was watched by 30,038, the second-smallest attendance for a Wembley international. Now fans buying tickets for the friendly against Switzerland on Wednesday week will also be able to get tickets for the Portugal game on December 12 at half-price.

If England games at Wembley are to be available at a discount surely it is time part of the show was taken back to the provinces. A year ago an Under-21 game at Newcastle drew a crowd of more than 25,000, and even if they at present prefer watching Kevin Keegan's reserves to Terry Venables vegetables the point was well made.

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		£15,000	£173.71	£209.52	£328.69
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What does he think of his label as the nearly man of politics? David Owen adopts a position of extreme languor at the question, swinging his loafers over the side of his chair. "Well, it would have been nice to be Prime Minister, but it doesn't burn me up. The right way would have been not to leave the Labour Party."

Outlook page 17

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,490

Indispensable to all crossword addicts! A copy of the brand new Collins Thesaurus, the ultimate browser's wordfinder will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,490, 6 Bushey Hall Road, Bushey, Herts., WD2 2EA, by first post on Friday, or by fax to 01923 225885. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday November 13.

Name .....

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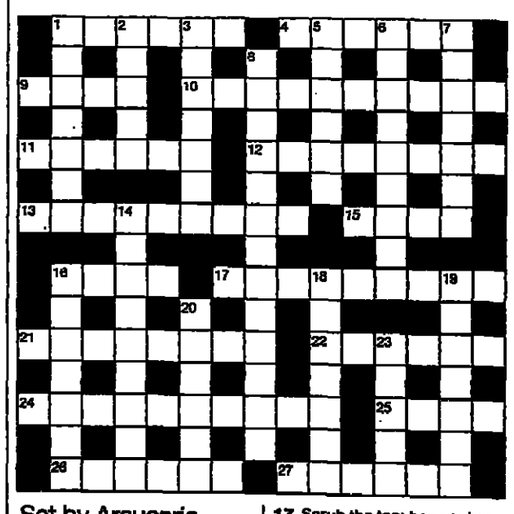


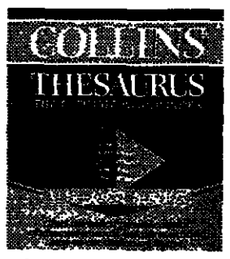
Set by Araucaria

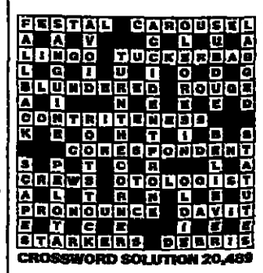
Across

1 The stars that fall (6)
4 Digital language? (6)
9 Tainted like the stars? (4)
10 Forest and castle stagger Sir Bernard (10)
11 Alcohol in the bloodstream, maybe after numbered hole (6)
12 Firsts first: you get killed returning without it (8)
13 1 across refined South African prime minister (4,5)
15 Piece canned by star (4)
16 Cipher or defined ethics (12) (4)
17 Scrub the tea: have salmon on a plate (9 in Western) (9)
21 A 25 in beer: take your pick (1,2,5)
22,25 Snails were turned into stars . . . (6,4)
24 . . . Baby? Have one (6,4)
25 See 22
26 Composed for a steed? (6)
27 One that's lost like a faithful dog (6)

Down

1 Dog from 1 across to 18? (7)
2 Foot may be in this boot here? (5)
3 Irregular-sounding primate (7)
5 Painter's home and dry (6)
6 Large bird, switchback with 1 across (3,6)
7 King's companion at French city: his 25 is 1 across (7)
8 Psychotics subvert small hospital having chosen prizes (13)
14 Gave up job when sailor departed without punishment (9)
16 Scale of clues is wrong (7)
18 Obsolete weapon in 24 (7)
19 Many items — not thousands — used for convenience (7)
20 Art investigator could be 9 in the hierarchy (6)
23 Broadcaster could be worse (5)





CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,489

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24 Dynasty: The wealth and misery of the Gettys

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1995

The Guardian Outlook

ackney owns, called e worst chool in the ountry, ubjected to a overnment hit squad' and ondemned to lie, is rife with anger and rumour. DAVE HILL and JOHN CARVEL trace the row's bitter history and its implications for similarly troubled inner city schools. Below, MARK LUSHINGTON gives the local view

Pupils powerless . . . but protesting at the closure of their school MICHAEL CRABTREE

Why does it have to close?

THE London Borough of Hackney can inspire horror and hope with equal vividness, its cantankerousness seen as endearing or frightening, its social diversity hailed as dauntless cultural richness or indicted as a symptom of inexorable decline. But not many perceive much but sadness in the saga that now looks likely to end with the closure of Hackney Downs comprehensive school for boys.

Deservedly or not, Hackney Downs is now horribly stuck with its image as "the worst school in Britain", a breeding ground of academic failure and rampant indiscipline. Local traders speak of fights and filthy language at a nearby bus stop. Teenagers from a neighbouring girls' comprehensive walking past it yesterday expressed relief that no remaining pupils would be decanted into their school.

The school is to close at the end of the year on the recommendation of a group of "trouble-shooters" — the North East London Education Association — sent in by Education Secretary Gillian Shephard to take the running of Hackney Downs out of the hands of its board of governors. Mrs Shephard has the final decision on closure after a notional consultation process. Hackney citizens, ill-acquainted with the machinations of state education policy and funding, may be persuaded by the notion that the disposal of the school would make a decisive end to a bad business that has dragged on for far too long.

But if there really was no hope for Hackney Downs, it was hard to explain the tears of the pupils and the angry sense of betrayal among many of their parents which greeted the decision to close it. Why were they so upset if the school was so dreadful?

The truth was that Hackney Downs had hope, but realising it was going to be too expensive.

A tremendous spirit had built up in the school and its surrounding community over the previous two years of fighting closure proposals which were hatched in Hackney Town Hall by senior officials, led by the Director of Education, Gus John.

The school roll might be shrinking because the town hall ordered that it could not have fresh intakes of 11-year-olds for two years running. The ceiling tiles might be dropping off in the technology room as rain seeped in from above — a consequence of years of general neglect and capital underfunding.

But Hackney Downs had a commitment and a sense of identity which many more conventional and ordered schools might have envied. Survival became a key issue in local politics. It played a part in the overthrow of the Labour leadership on Hackney council and its replacement by another set of Labour councillors who overturned John's closure plan.

For the working class boys and their parents this was a rare moment of empowerment. Against the odds they had mobilised and they had won. If love of school could have been turned into love of learning at the school, Hackney Downs' days as the worst of the worst would have been over.

This need not have been merely wishful thinking. In a report due for publication on Wednesday, the National Commission on Education observes that the unifying effect of surviving a crisis is a common reason why successful schools in the most disadvantaged areas have managed to arrest decline and thrive against the odds: "In these schools the will to succeed was strengthened, rather than weakened, by calamities."

But that first fragile flowering of hope at Hackney Downs was stamped out as soon as Shephard ordered in her hit squad. From her perspective, the council's decision to keep the school open was just another eccentric Trotskyite nonsense. Never mind that her policy of parental choice should have caused her to heed what the Hackney Downs parents were saying. As she saw it, there would never be a better opportunity to use new powers under the 1993 Education Act to take a school over and let a team of her nominees decide its future.

As soon as Richard Painter, the Education Association chairman, arrived, he made it clear to the senior teaching staff that they were part of the problem, not the solution. He did not pause long enough to notice how much the boys loved their school. Some prestigious members of his team came to the school so rarely that they would have been labelled habitual truants if they had been pupils.

It was the money that talked. There were 300 empty places at Homerton House, Hackney's other boys secondary school only a mile away and where the Hackney Downs boys are to be sent. The cost of refurbishing Hackney Downs was £3 million. It occupied valuable housing land on a quiet street overlooking one of the borough's most desirable stretches of open common.

The price which could be obtained from selling the site (withheld from the official report this week) would be huge — certainly enough to pay off staff redundancies, refurbish Homerton House and leave plenty to spare for other projects.

This ruthless financial logic is hard to counter. Who can say for sure that the flickering of commitment and hope at Hackney Downs would have been enough to secure a better education for the boys than they would get at Homerton House?

The experts on the EA team never asked the question in this way and — outrageously — they imposed a gagging order on Betty Hales, the acting head, to prevent her organising a campaign to make them do so.

Passions in the school are running high. The atmosphere seems to resemble a hybrid of the Alamo and the Marie Celeste. Gus John is decried as a collaborator with Shephard's department. Pat Corrigan, the former chair of Hackney Downs governors who was forced to resign over the closure issue, is recalled with contempt. The intrusion of the EA is described as "repulsive", and its membership denounced as opportunists and hatchet men wholly out of sympathy with the ethos of the school.

HACKNEY Downs takes a lot of boys with special educational needs, and several who have been excluded from other schools. Staff pride themselves on their commitment to these educational rejects, a policy pursued with vigour since Hales's appointment as acting head in March 1994.

But, staff complain, the five men of the EA (who are paid £250 a day) see "nothing honourable in trying to work with difficult kids", nothing of worth. Painter is chief executive of the ADT Education Trust which runs the ADT college in the Conservative flagship borough of Wandsworth. ADT itself is a Bermuda-based security systems company which has installed its technology in many Wandsworth schools and is owned by a noted supporter of the Conservative Party.

Another EA member, Bryan Bass, is the former head of the fee-paying City of London Boys school. A third, Michael Barber, is Dean of the London University Institute of Education and an adviser to Labour's education spokesman, David Blunkett. Barber's connections with the Labour leadership and his approval of John's stance are seen in the Hackney Downs camp as further, depressing evidence of the Opposition's attitude towards schools in Labour boroughs which represent potential political embarrassment. Labour's first instinct, they complain, is to get its condemnation in before the Daily Mail.

The latest rumour to emerge from the staff room (fuelled by a note left after an EA meeting had been held) is that John, the EA and Geoff Dale (the head of Homerton House) have devised a plan to have Homerton transformed into a City Technology College. If that were true, would the boys be more enthused? Not really: "If they could spend it on a CTC, why not spend it here?"

These pupils bitterly resent the hammering the school has taken from the press and insist that local sentiment is with them. They've been round the streets with petitions, they say, and plenty of people have signed. Bad behaviour, they insist, is no worse than at any school in the country and "there's no big problem with bullying, or anything like that".

Yes, they acknowledge that Hackney Downs' league table position is not impressive: only 11 per cent of children achieved GCSE grades A-C. But Homerton House's percentage, they point out, is 10.

The Hackney Downs experience has implications which stretch far beyond the borough. It was one of 87 schools identified by the National School Inspectorate as failing — between 1 and 2 per cent of those inspected under the current Ofsted regime. If the figures are grossed up to cover all schools, this suggests there may be 500 failing schools across the country.

According to Barber, there are another 1,250 to 2,500 schools which are struggling, but not yet declared to be needing special measures. "For 30 years education policy was about providing support for schools without any pressure [to punish bad performance]. For the past 10 years it has been all pressure without support. What we need now is a balance between the two," he says.

His proposals for encouraging local authorities to intervene constructively to help problem schools turn themselves round have also been taken up by Shephard. But he expects there may be a hard core of up to 15 schools which the local authority cannot rescue and does not want to close. Perhaps half of them will be candidates for the Government to send in an education association.

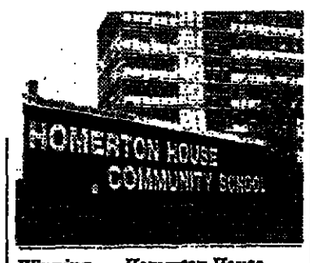
If so, the lesson of Hackney Downs may have a wider resonance. When a hit squad next moves into another failing school, it should check the patient for signs of life and hope before switching off the life support machine.

It's an education in asset stripping

THE students, teachers and parents at Hackney Downs school are victims of a vicious pre-electoral process, in which both major parties are colluding. The casualties are clear: 27 teachers dismissed and defamed by the North East London Education Association's prejudiced and badly-evidenced report; 206 students, many in the run-up to their GCSE exams, directed to a neighbouring school straight after Christmas.

The members of the Education Association (EA) — government appointees — have taken a mere 10 weeks to rubbish one school and praise a very similar school just down the road. We believe in the ability of all schools to improve to excellence, given the necessary funding and professional support. The question is — why should one school be closed down, while the other receives £1 million more of government money? The answer is simple: asset stripping. Hackney Downs has been neglected and mismanaged by the local education authority for several years; the government hit squad reckons that the cost of renewing the buildings is £2-£3 million. If they can sell the site for private development, they can use the proceeds to pay for staff redundancies; give the second school £1 million; and offer the education authority what is left for rebuilding the rest of the secondary schools.

And what does the Government get in return? The "opportunity" for the second school. Homerton House, to "opt" to become a Technology College, ripe for "opting out" of local authority control. As they are the only boys' schools in the borough, it may be reckoned that parents will accept the carrot of extra funding and ignore the stick of losing local accountability through an elected governing body and local authority elections. This would revive John Major's failed policy of asking parents to choose grant-maintained schools. When this was last tried three years ago — at my own school, Stoke Newington, a popular mixed comprehensive — the parents voted 3-to-1 to remain within the local authority.



Winning . . . Homerton House, which is to be given £1 million

The problem for the Labour Party in Hackney is that their mismanagement of Hackney Downs has led to the takeover of the school. Shutting schools is cheaper and simpler than making them better. Teachers in Hackney Downs want the lying to stop; they want the borough to call an immediate public meeting, in response to the Secretary of State's decision; they want to keep the school open.

There should be a postponement of the deadline on consultation to allow parents and Hackney residents to meet and give a proper response. Year II students should finish their studies in their existing school until their GCSE examinations — otherwise many will drop out of education altogether.

A public inquiry should be set up, to look at the events that have led to this outcome. The orgy of teacher-bashing this week was initiated by the EA to distract attention from the fact that their decision was essentially finance-led. It has been successful and, as a bonus, it has turned attention away from government education cuts, rising class sizes and the threat to privatise nursery education. It has been a Tory spin-doctor's dream; we will watch the forthcoming Honours lists for the name of Richard Painter, chair of the EA — Mr Major owes him one.

It is possible to discredit differing opinions — "they would say that, wouldn't they?" — but it is impossible to suppress the Hackney Downs' students; their laughter, anger and tears must lead to an inquiry into whether their education was "sold" for political profit and electoral advantage.

Mark Lushington represents the Hackney Teachers' Association

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Russia's rocky future

ALAS, POOR BORIS — or not, as the case may be. Yesterday President Yeltsin's meeting in hospital with his prime minister was intended to show that he is getting much better. But the film shown later on television failed to reassure. At least this time it was genuine, but Mr Yeltsin sat awkwardly in his chair and his diction was slow. Mrs Yeltsin's remark that "we are all in God's hands" may be a shade too honest for comfort.

Outside Russia, the commentators stress how unwise it was to place all one's faith in one man — and then do exactly the same again. If Mr Yeltsin is not fit to run again for the presidency *next year then, it is said, the world* will be best off with Mr Chernomyrdin. Washington and the international money markets would be "quietly happy" if he came top of the June poll. It seems ages ago (actually just three years) since Mr Yeltsin was castigated in the West for choosing this product of the old "Soviet industrial management elite" to replace the arch-reformer Yegor Gaidar. Now Mr Chernomyrdin is regarded as a technocrat who has made the grade to politician and even as a relatively popular one. There is some truth in this though the prime minister's new political party, Our Home is Russia, is now lampooned as Our Home is Gazprom (his former energy fiefdom which he still indirectly controls). But the real significance is that the West now has lower expectations — and perhaps more realistic ones — of the chances of red-blooded reform in Russia. There are even doubts as to the wisdom of such a policy. Most people would happily settle for a lukewarm bureaucratic approximation and any lack of enthusiasm for Mr Chernomyrdin is compensated for by the unnerving nature of the alternatives. Of course all this speculation would be redundant if Mr Yeltsin's aides could be believed in insisting the campaign has already begun to ensure his re-election. But it should have become clear by now that, for political as well as actuarial reasons, the prospect of Mr Yeltsin seeking to succeed himself will be an even more terrifying one. Whatever the final verdict on his performance, he offers no particular qualifications apart from being there already. His erratic health *and judgment should properly rule him* out of consideration. It would be unwise for his former fans abroad to indicate a preference for someone so overwhelmingly discredited at home.

The more immediate uncertainty is the outcome of next month's parliamentary elections, which will in turn affect the presidential contest. The Supreme Court has been meeting to review the disbarment of two would-be contesting parties — one reformist and one hard-line — last week by the election commission. That decision was based on technicalities and its reversal makes sense: the Russian people should have the fullest possible choice. But the participation of Grigory Yavlinsky's Yabloko party will produce no miracles for the reformist cause. The Russian people have been battered by a transition to capitalism which too often has seemed like a headlong descent. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development reports hopefully that the Russian economy may have stopped sliding. Even so its GDP will only stand at just over half of the 1989 level in real terms.

The former communists led by Gennady Zyuganov now appear to be likely to do well on December 17. So will the popular nationalist Congress of Russian Communities (KRO) led by ex-general Alexander Lebed. Whether or not Mr Zyuganov succeeds in forming a tactical alliance with the KRO the future face of Russian politics will probably assume a more "red-brown" tinge. It would be as well to get accustomed to the idea. In a world of resurgent nationalism, Russia's long-established brand can hardly be expected to lie down. And the appeal of reformed communism to those who have failed to benefit from the reforms of the last five years is hardly surprising. Mr Zyuganov speaks of "the alienation of power structures from the people", adding interestingly that it happened in 1917 and must not happen again. These uncertain prospects may not make life so easy, but then whoever really expected post-Soviet Russia just to roll over?

The true cost of transport

THE EXCHEQUER is still losing £1 billion a year from the use — and misuse — of company cars, according to Transport 2000, the environmental lobby. Even if this estimate is only half correct, it *must be a tempting source of* revenue for a chancellor facing stiff departmental resistance to his plans to cut spending in order to finance pre-election tax cuts. There can be no doubt that, however much the perk is enjoyed by recipients, the subsidisation of company cars by the taxpayer can no longer be justified at a time when the demands of the welfare state are straining public finances to the limit of what people are prepared to pay. To its credit, the Government has tackled this problem by progressively taxing the benefit in kind enjoyed by users of company cars and the associated perk of free petrol. It has now got to the stage where it is hardly a perk at all for those who don't clock up large mileages.

Transport 2000, however, reckons that a huge number of company car users are telling the Inland Revenue that they drive more than the 2,500 mile minimum at which extra tax relief can be claimed when in fact they don't. This can be seen, it believes, by the fact that less than 10 per cent of company car drivers admit to the Revenue to driving less than 2,500 miles a year whereas the National Travel Survey gives a figure of 48 per cent. That alone costs the Treasury £516 million a year and if you add tax lost by untaxed company cars (£399 million) and undertaxed free fuel (£145 million) the loss comes to over £1 billion, *even before counting* in the environmental cost of excessive private and business driving (to qualify for higher tax breaks) and the higher number of accidents caused by company cars.

But this doesn't mean that the Chancellor should have a licence to do what he likes. The perks and abuses attached to company cars should be consigned to oblivion, but only as part of an integrated approach to solving the problem of inner city congestion and not as a a quick budgetary fix. If the large number of company car owners who unnecessarily congest and pollute our city centres are to be discouraged, then they and everyone else must have a viable alternative way of getting to work. A large chunk of the revenue gained should be spent on alternatives *like park-and-ride* facilities, improved walkways, a proper network of custom-built cycle lanes, car pooling and, above all, better and cheaper public transport. Only yesterday London Transport announced that it is putting its prices up by more than the rate of inflation (admittedly cushioned by a discount scheme for bulk users) and British Rail is expected to do the same. For a fraction of the true social cost of motoring, people could commute on an efficient public infrastructure. We have *even reached the stage where it might be* electorally popular as well. The Chancellor should ensure that as many people as possible do what he does. Walk to work.

Salty old lash of homophobia

Rattling the bars

Ian Aitken

DURING a brief but inglorious career in the Royal Navy just after the war (I got all my sea-time on the Gosport Ferry) there was a recruiting poster for would-be sailors which caused us some embarrassment. Starkly simple, it consisted of a more-than-life-size silhouette of a matelot standing with his bellbottoms wide apart. The inscription was: "There's an opening for you in the Royal Navy."

We sailorboys needed only to stand near one of these advertisements on a railway platform or in the street for passing Brylcreem Boys (RAF) and Pongos (Army) to hurl a barrage of ribald comment at us. They reckoned they knew what that opening was. After all, it wasn't long since Winston Churchill had told an angry admiral protesting about a threat to the traditions of the Royal Navy that these traditions essentially consisted of "rum, sodomy and the lash".

Nowadays, of course, both the rum and the lash have been taken away from the Senior Service, which by my calculation leaves only the sodomy. But in those days the bulkheads of all RN ships and shore stations displayed the Articles of War, which listed petrifying punishments for all kinds of offences. One item read: "Sodomy with man or beast: the punishment shall be DEATH, or such other punishment as hereinafter mentioned."

Alas, this didn't seem to be an entirely effective deterrent. On one occasion I had to *fight off the attentions of a* bemedalled three-badge gunner's mate, who evidently fancied me. Frustrated in his purpose, he slapped me on some charge or other almost every time he encountered me from that moment on.

So I read Admiral Sir Hugo White's stirring rejection of the courtroom attempt to let homosexuals into the Navy and the other two services with just a trace of scepticism. I don't know what the Navy is like 50 years on (I developed an unbounded admiration and affection for it, by the way), but I doubt if allowing lady matelots aboard its ships will have totally eradicated that particular tradition.

□ IT ISN'T only MPs who are approached by commercial organisations in search of inside advice on the ways of parliament and the intentions of ministers. Political journalists, too, are sometimes offered money to provide clandestine intelligence.

I know because I received such an approach in the mid-seventies from a very senior Conservative MP (now dead) *with close links to a City firm.* Over a drink, he offered me an annual retainer in exchange for the benefit of occasional private warnings of forthcoming events which might affect their business activities.

I turned him down with some indignation, saying that any such activity would be totally contrary to the rules of the lobby, not mention the basic ethics of my trade. "I don't know why you're getting so *hoity-toity," said the* MP. "We're only offering it to you because old X (and he named a lobby journalist of some seniority) is retiring. If he could be happy with it, why can't you?"

In fact, a register of the outside interests of lobby journalists was eventually introduced, after indignant MPs asked why they should have to disclose their bits on the side if the hacks didn't. But like the MPs' register, it doesn't reveal the sums involved. *It might be fun if*... it did.

□ WE NOW know that four million qualified voters have disappeared from electoral rolls since the poll tax fiasco and the arrival of its successor, council tax. Because few of the vanished electors are likely to be Tories, this represents another electoral hurdle to be cleared by Labour, on top of the recent changes in constituency borders.

It also confirms the essential rationality of financing local government by way of Mrs Thatcher's *bête noir*, the rating system. For buildings can't get up and walk away, while the people who live in them can. People *were the target of the poll tax,* and they remain a partial target of the council tax.

Real democracy over a barrel

The Commonwealth conference will fudge its condemnation of Nigeria, argues MARTIN WOOLLACOTT, and other repressive regimes will escape scot free. Illustration by PETER TILL

ALONG the narrow roads of the Jaffna peninsula this weekend, three divisions of the Sri Lankan army are bloodily pushing forward, killing Tamil Tigers but losing soldiers to landmines and ambushes as they advance. The men no longer wear the quaint British style of uniform they had 20 years ago, when the conflict had its small beginnings. That was when Sri Lanka's entire army amounted to not much more than a couple of brigades and it was possible to have tea and cakes in Jaffna Fort with charming Sandhurst-trained officers, who suggested with a chuckle that the trouble would soon be over.

Now the troops wear the international Americanised garb of soldiers, and they command tanks, artillery, and aircraft, one of which, a few weeks ago, unloaded its bombs on a Jaffna school yard, killing *34 and wounding 150,* according to independent reports. It was an incident as horrific as any in, say, Sarajevo, but it did not get a great deal of coverage outside the island, partly because the Tigers have forfeited any international sympathy by their own ruthlessness in war and intransigence in negotiations. The Sri Lankan flag will probably go up over a Jaffna largely empty of people — as many as 400,000 may have already fled the town — a few days before the Commonwealth Conference opens in Auckland. There, Sri Lanka's difficulties will receive less attention than those of Nigeria, where another army, which in that case is also the government, is responsible for ethnic repression in Ogoniland, as well as more generalised misrule.

Nigeria is a very ethnically mixed state, while Sri Lanka has only one substantial ethnic minority. Yet they both display the worst defect of many new states and some old *ones, the failure to* accommodate diversity, the resort to military means to contain it, and the subsequent damage to all social institutions. It would be very unfair to equate the Sri Lankan and Nigerian governments. But that the two countries belong together in one sense, we have on no less an authority than that of the Home Secretary, who at one point may have bracketed them with Algeria.

Far from the common thread being that such countries are "safe" for ordinary folk, the common thread is that in each a breakdown of order, at least in some regions, is reaching the point where mass displacements of population are a serious possibility. People in these circumstances do not flee so much from the immediate threat of death, but from the disappearance of the opportunity to live like human beings — to be educated, to marry, to pursue a career or a business, to have a home, and to exist in some degree of safety.

The very word "violation" carries the implication that "observance" of human rights is what happens most of the time. But in some countries violation becomes the norm to the point where even if the authorities are replaced or the conflict comes to an end, the mechanisms of normal social life are terribly damaged. The *internal wars that many* new states have waged tend to be particularly nasty, particularly full of atrocities and particularly lacking in rules of conduct. What the Commonwealth heads of government face at Auckland, under the heading of human rights, is this problem of the erosion of the institutions that make societies workable, under the pressure of internal war, the operation of military rule or, more subtly, of facade democracies.

It would be apocalyptic to say that this institutional failure is anything like a universal threat, but it is a very real one. The Commonwealth itself is a vulnerable institution, a part of international "civil society" that is as much under threat as are some domestic civil societies.

ITS FRAGILITY is underlined by the fact that if Quebec had chosen independence, the Commonwealth would have lost at one stroke both one of its two most important financial backers and the foremost example of the peaceful *containment of an ethnic* problem within one state framework.

Former colonies are not finding it that easy to follow the Commonwealth into a new phase where its moral centre does not revolve around the sins of colonisers or white settlers, but around the failures of African and Asian governments, the atrocities committed by their armies, and the suppression of aspirations to self-determination. That pulls against old loyalties in the anti-colonial struggle, and against racial solidarity. Britain and the old white dominions, on the other hand, know that one unpleasant fact about *morality is that it costs money* and hurts business.

Yet if the Commonwealth is not a moral tradition, it is nothing. Its precise value lies in the effort to reach a moral consensus across racial and geographical lines. In Auckland that is going to be easy on the issue of French nuclear testing. Nigeria is another matter. South Africa may well take a soft line, reflecting ANC gratitude for past help, Nelson Mandela's characteristic caution and his desire to retain his "sound" reputation in big business circles. Without a strong South African lead, the indignation of other African governments, including Zimbabwe and Uganda, may not take the conference *that far. The Nigerian delegation* will have some tricks ready — more detail on the return to civilian rule, perhaps a commutation of the sentences on Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other accused in the Ogoni trial. The censure of Nigeria may consist only of a decision that in future military governments will not be represented at Commonwealth summits, perhaps accompanied by a Contact Group commission to monitor a return to civilian rule. Better would be an instruction to the Secretary General to prepare a sanctions programme, including oil, that would take early effect in the absence of any clear changes.

If we can hope, at least, for some relatively strong action on Nigeria, there is likely to be none on the lesser but still worrying democratic offences of other African countries. Nor is there likely to be any movement on Sri Lanka, which would require a highly unlikely mediation request from the two sides. Commonwealth summits have often become single issue meetings, and the issue this time is Nigeria. But Nigeria is representative of much more than itself. The legacy of empire was the mixing and muddling of peoples. The Commonwealth is a collection of multi-ethnic states, whose most critical task is to stay in one piece *without resort to the coercion* that in the end can destroy everything. That is why the issues symbolised by Nigeria, and by the troops on the Jaffna Road, can be deemed more important than those raised by the old South Africa, which made the Commonwealth an effective moral engine for so long.

Smallweed

SCYLLA and Charybdis. *Isn't it time we* waved goodbye to this tiresome twosome? Once they merely lurked in the waters off Sicily entrapping hapless seafarers. Now they lie in wait for incautious wordsmiths destroying every sentence they infiltrate. "The committee has done its best to steer a difficult course between the Scylla of restoring public confidence after a few nasty shocks and the Charybdis of making this House a place from which people with wide interests will be tempted to seek leave of absence." That was Lord Jenkins this week, in a debate on the registration of members' interests. You expect this sort of language perhaps in the antique opulence of the Lords, and anyway with Jenkins there's always the chance he is sending himself up.

The trouble is that they crop up in normal life, too. *Do the deadly duo,* would you say, speed or impede the flow of a TV reviewer's tribute to Alan Bleasdale's skill in his new drama series, Jake's Progress, in "steering between the Scylla of sentimentality and the Charybdis of melodrama"?

Often the usage is even more woozy: in the sort of overblown writing which has its characters poised between the Scylla of 18th century Rosicrucianism and the Charybdis of supporting Manchester City. There is only one excuse nowadays for invoking S and C: they're marginally to be preferred to their recent and horribly overworked American replacements, the Rock and the Hard Place.

LET US HAVE less of such tired old metaphorical standbys, then; but more of the resurrection of toothsome old words fallen into disuse. In the Times yesterday, the sketch-writer Matthew Parris accused Tony Blair of emitting a "parboiled" soundbite. Having never been wholly sure what this word meant, Smallweed ran to the dictionary, which says it means thoroughly boiled, as in: "Take fayre caboges . . . parboyle hem in fayre water, an presse hem on a fayre bord": advice as true today, I trow, as when it was written, though stylistically dogged perhaps by the repetition of "fayre."

This gives rise to a secondary meaning, as used by Parris — overheated; as in "my harte in choller perboylde was" of 1566, or the *slightly less tasteful* "he . . . parboil'd . . . in his mellow sweat lay frying" of 1682 (attributed, very aptly, to a writer called Boileau).

THE STEADY charge of Wimbledon FC towards the foot of the Premier League table is attributed to the fact that 19 of their first team squad are injured, suspended, or both. Their centre-back Scott Fitzgerald was recently shown the red card while being carted off on a stretcher. Still, at least, as a BBC commentator astutely observed, that should give him time to write more of his excellent novels.

I find the way modern footballers constantly fall to bits quite extraordinary. There was within living memory (well, mine anyway) a season (1952-3) when Huddersfield Town fielded the same defence (goalkeeper, two full backs, three half backs) in every match. The outside left, Vic Metcalfe, also played all 42 games. Why does that now seem impossible?

Presumably the modern game makes fiercer demands on players' physiques. It's unlikely that Huddersfield players who grew up in the thirties and forties, and had to live on the stingy minimum wage, were better fed than today's performers.

RUUD LUBBERS, according to Reuter, "looks set" (another usage which deserves the chop) to become Nato secretary-general. He's backed by Britain, Germany, France and Italy. Curious, that: it seems only days ago that Smallweed was reading that Britain was backing Brittan (Leon, not Sam) and responsible countries like Germany were dutifully falling in with us. I think I know what has clinched it. Ruud has a distinction that Leon lacks: his name has added a word to the language. The word is "belubber", which means to speak well and with great conviction, but to mean little one can later recall.

High time our own tongue was similarly enriched. We need the word "bemajor" (to embark on a homely allusion but get it subtly wrong). Begummering, I think, means a parboiled kind of moralising. By the *time of the next election, I* hope to be clear enough about his intentions to define the word "beblair".

THE COLUMNIST Barbara Amiel, who is married to Conrad Black, wrote a parboiled piece this week about the Quebec Referendum. 'If Quebec votes to quit," it was headed, "blame the liberal elite." I sometimes try to imagine what life is like in the Black / Amiel household. I bet the liberal elite cops it every 10 minutes. The tap in the kitchen is leaking? The liberal elite is to blame. The labrador has been sick on the carpet? It's *that liberal elite again.* Black is said to be miffed by the defection of the Daily Telegraph editor Max Hastings to the London Evening Standard, and also by his failure to land Paul Dacre of the Mail as replacement. Neither is exactly a liberal. But thumbs down from both Scyllamax and Charybdacre must have been deeply galling. I bet the liberal elite got bashed for a solid two hours.

THE *FIELD* put Lord Ralph Percy eleventh in a list of the country's finest guns. The others are: Hugh van Cutsem; the Duke of Roxburghe; David Oliver; Caspar Macdonald-Hall; Tony Ball; Philip Fussell; Ned Goschen; Philip Butt; Jim Albone; and Basil Kinch. — *Times news story on the new Duke of Northumberland.*

Just thought you might want to write these names down, so that if you bump into their owners, you will know to kow-tow.

Why 11, I wonder? Do they make up a team? If so, do they line up 4-2-4, 4-4-2, or something more continental, like 3-5-1-1?

Labour goes for the colonial vote

Martin Kettle

IN THIS age of globalised finance, globalised trade, globalised communications, globalised entertainment and even globalised disease, it might seem to follow that we are entering an age of globalised politics too. Yet it is obvious that nothing could be further from the case. Even with Middle East peace negotiated by the shores of a Norwegian fjord and Balkan leaders travelling to distant Ohio to draw new maps of Bosnia's boundaries, the idea of globalised politics seems merely laughable. Anyone who suggested the really rather logical thought that a world economy might need to be answerable to a world government would be dismissed by most people as simply insane.

Actually I take this almost comprehensive absence of global democratic politics as a good sign rather than the opposite. It shows a healthy popular realism about the limits of the possible. Most of life and all of politics is a stubbornly backyard affair. For every business traveller who flashes round the world living in Hotel-land, there are hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens who have never been to London and don't much care if they never do either. In my experience, most globalism is mental escapism by another name.

All the same you would think that the actual fact of international deregulation might in some way have led to an increase in global politics rather than to a decrease. And in small ways I suppose it has.

By far the most obvious example in our own corner of the globe is the European Parliament, whose existence might seem at first sight to prove the argument that cross-border electoral politics is on the rise. Yet elections to the Strasbourg assembly are notoriously national in character rather than international. And the parliament's largely irrelevant actual record also supports the alternative, sceptic view that politics is about real identities not fantasy ones.

Even so, with freedom of movement increasing in Europe as a result of the single market, political boundaries are being undermined in significant small ways. But the reality of this actual global politics is not that it is part of some grandiose edifice of world democracy. It is much more mundane. It is simply that in the modern world, more people live outside their country of origin than used to be the case.

Real global politics, as opposed to idealised or fantasy global politics, is about getting to the expats. It's about the increased numbers of people who have a right to vote in their own country but who live, either because they work or have retired there, somewhere else. And it's about making sure that your expats are better organised than the other lot's. It may not be glamorous, but in campaigning terms it's quantity not quality that counts.

The Conservative Party was the first to recognise this fact and to sense its possibilities. Until 1985 the only British citizens living overseas who had the right to vote in elections were either service personnel or embassy staff. But in that year the Thatcher government extended the right to anyone who had been living out of the country for up to five years.

THEN, under the 1989 Representation of the People Act, the five-year limit was increased to 20 years and was also broadened to include people who had been too young to register before they left. In retrospect these reforms can be seen as reflections of a changing world. More people were working overseas, not least in Europe, accompanied by their families. What was more natural therefore than to respond to these new patterns of population distribution than by modernising the electoral system to accommodate them?

Yet at the time the changes were viewed much more cynically, and not without reason. Both Conservatives and Labour assumed that moves to make it easier for expat Brits to vote in British elections would primarily benefit the Tories. These suspicions were soon gratified by the creation of a Conservatives Abroad unit in Tory Central Office. Since these voters would not be exposed to electoral campaigning in any way, organisation was all, and the Conservatives, as usual in those days, got in first.

Yet the expat vote remained and remains seriously under-organised. The best estimates say that there are at least 600,000 potential overseas voters. In theory that's 1.5 per cent of the electorate. General elections have turned on far less, especially in marginal seats.

However the registration requirements — voters have to register annually in the constituency which they last inhabited and must nominate a proxy to vote on their behalf — mean that they remain an untapped resource, even in general election years when the registration process is more assiduous. In the 1987 election, only 13,000 such voters registered. Even in 1992, when eligibility had been extended, the figure reached only 34,454. Unless and until our electoral registration system is comprehensively modernised (something for which there is a compelling case and which should be included in future electoral reform legislation) it seems unlikely that the overseas vote will have a sweeping impact upon the outcome of our elections.

Yet the outcome in marginal seats is another matter. In 1992 there were only two seats (Vale of Glamorgan and Bristol North West) where the total overseas vote exceeded the eventual majority. But with better registration, there is no reason why the current average of around 60 overseas votes per seat should not be given a substantial hike. And since in a tight general election as few as 2,000 voters in half a dozen marginals can decide the whole outcome, it is not impossible to envisage a situation in which the expats could end up deciding who governs Britain for the next five years.

This powerful thought explains why Labour has now caught up with the Conservatives on overseas strategy. For Conservatives Abroad read also Labour International. This week Labour's deputy leader John Prescott announced the setting up of a Labour office in Sydney, aiming at registering some of the 160,000 British voters who now live in Australia.

Not all expats are rich tax exiles. Many are simply people trying to earn a living. With its trade union networks to assist it, there is no reason why Labour should not harvest significant numbers of votes through its improved campaign machine. Global politics of this kind is here to stay. The Battle of Waterloo may have been won on the playing fields of Eton. It is not inconceivable the next general election could be won in the suburbs of Brussels and Brisbane.

The wardrobe full of weeds

All three parties have been in disarray this week over their policies on soft drugs. Meanwhile, ordinary people are creating policy for themselves. OLLIE WILSON reports on a booming cottage industry — DIY cannabis-growing

IN HIS grandfather's old wardrobe, Jez inspects a thriving small crop of cannabis greatly assisted by a 600-watt sodium light bulb. "What beauts!" he enthuses, gently stroking the leaf of a plant. "You can almost see them growing."

Jez — a factory worker — is one of many home cannabis producers who line a cupboard with silver foil and use powerful sodium or metal halide bulbs to make their plants grow. This has created a multi-million pound British trade in lighting equipment and marijuana seed — and the business is legal.

But growing cannabis is against the law. Still your chances of getting caught are next to zero, says Jez. "Not many people produce it on a grand scale to make money. It's just for personal use. I'm sure the police would like to catch people doing it, but I don't think they have the manpower. They only act if someone grasses and the chances of that happening are slim."

The only way to thwart the boom is to outlaw the sale of the bulbs and lamps. But the Home Office is reluctant to go down that road. A spokesman said: "The sale of lamps and bulbs are not controlled because they do have other legitimate uses. But if it becomes an issue and evidence is brought forward, we will look at it." Barrister Sharman Knight says a new law would cause more harm than good: "It is very difficult because the lamps are also used for the cultivation of a lot of legal crops. Many horticultural businesses would suffer or even go to the wall if they outlawed the sale of equipment."

She says that even electricity companies are in an awkward legal position if they tip off the police that a household is using a large amount of electricity. "If the board divulges any information they have on computer, even to the police, they could be breaking the Data Protection Act."

Another home grower, Martin, says police have taken to using heat-sensitive cameras from helicopters to catch out growers. "The ideal place to grow cannabis would be in a concrete shelter so no light gets out. But under the stairs or in the cellar, using reflective foil on the walls, are good. If you put it in the loft, you stand more risk of being caught because the heat escaping through the roof can be detected from above."

Martin is a bigger producer than Jez: "Before lamps, the cannabis wasn't very good in this country. Now I have three lamps . . . I use 600 watt bulbs and a transformer to run it off 110 volts. That cuts down the cost of electricity. You have to be careful or the electricity board will notice a mad increase in your requirement, equivalent to running seven tumble driers at the same time. It might cost you £500 in extra electricity for three months, like a small factory."

He says: "I've known people who get council flats but don't live there. They just instal their units and drop in once a week to feed the electricity meter. A friend of a friend invested £4,000 in equipment and he's just had his first crop — 12 kilos of top-quality, with a street value of £70,000."

Martin, who is growing 50 plants, says: "It's going on throughout Britain, but I'd say the biggest area of production is in Wales. There's a hell of a lot being grown there. I reckon more than 80 per cent of sodium bulbs and lamps are sold to cannabis growers.

'The Scottish Prison Service has my lamps and I don't think they're growing cannabis'

— Chris Meliniotas, risking the seed trade

"I grow my own because I got sick of being ripped off by street dealers. I didn't like the violence or taking the risk of being fobbed off with shoe polish or Oxo cubes."

The equipment, technically known as High Intensity Discharge Lighting (HIDL), has been widely available since 1992. The managers of garden centres that have chanced on this unexpected commercial goldmine are often wary of publicity. Jez and Martin's local retailer said over the telephone: "I'm not going to own up to anything I shouldn't have done. But the increase in growth rate brought on by sodium lighting and hydroponic water nutrient systems is phenomenal. With one 400 watt sodium light bulb, it is possible to grow 100 plants to maturity in just one square metre, and you can have four or more crops like that a year. The quality is absolutely brilliant."

Then he insisted I stop talking on the phone "because it might be bugged" and meet him personally so he could introduce me to customers who grow cannabis. But when I visited him at the garden centre, he had changed his mind. "Publicity could kill this business," he said, before suggesting we visit another retailer, BioBeam, of Birmingham.

That company has bases in England and Holland. Company directors from both countries were present at the offices in Newhall Hill, Birmingham, when I called. And business was brisk. BioBeam's English partner Dave Houlden says: "The increase in trade over the last 16 months has been phenomenal. We are selling up to 300 bulbs a month. A sodium lamp with 400 watt bulb costs £217. You'll get about six months use out of the bulb, leaving it on for 18 hours a day. They give you accelerated growth. What takes six months to cultivate in normal daylight, can be grown in under two months."

The whole lights-and-hydroponics system comes from Holland: he and his Dutch partner, Raymond Warrens, claim 80 per cent of their business is commercial, much of it for tomato cultivation. Warrens says retailers must not be blamed for selling equipment which may be used for illegal cultivation. Warrens runs a coffee shop in Goes, Holland, at which cannabis is openly sold, but he and Houlden are eager to play down the link between sodium bulbs and cultivation of the drug. Houlden says: "As a company, we are not able to associate ourselves with it. We are aware it can happen. We don't condone it, but we are aware that section of the market is rapidly growing.

"Our rivals, Sunlight Systems, are giving the industry a bad name. They are advertising cannabis seed and have even trade-marked the brand names. The industry is waiting for them to get into trouble with the law."

A Home Office spokesman confirms: "Retailers could face prosecution for inciting someone to grow a controlled drug." Sunlight Systems founder, Chris Meliniotas, certainly isn't quaking in his boots at that hint. He has outlets in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh and Leicester, where he has his spacious headquarters. He claims an annual turnover of more than £2 million and is planning a string of new branches, starting with a warehouse in Liverpool.

He is refreshingly open; his garish advert in this year's Glastonbury Festival magazine screamed the names of Superskunk, Haze, Early Girl and Durban Poison. Why does he risk the seed trade? "It's a matter of principle," says Meliniotas: "There is no way I'm going to sit back and not sell a legal product when my competitors in Holland are able to sell them here."

He says the Home Office is keener on creating an atmosphere of fear than changing the law. "They start using words like enticement. I refuse point-blank to stop selling seeds, unless they stop Dutch companies exporting the seeds to Britain."

Meliniotas, who is writing a book on the history of the emergence of cannabis as a popular drug, believes European law would make it effectively impossible for seeds sales to be banned in Britain. "The Home Office knows that," he says. "So they are reduced to using dirty tricks to create fear." He says he's happy to be honest about his views, not running scared or behaving hypocritically, like the smaller traders. "I've had women in their sixties buying sodium lamps to grow cannabis to help them cope with the pain of serious illnesses such as multiple sclerosis. What's wrong with that?

"I've been in this business for 15 years. My lamps were used by the BBC to boost growth in David Attenborough's The Private Life Of Plants, and have been bought by just about every university, local authority and hospital in the country for legal cultivation. Even the Scottish Prison Service has some, and I don't think they're growing cannabis." He giggles before claiming: "We sell most equipment to leek and tomato growers. The cannabis-related trade is no more than 5 per cent of our business."

Back in a little backstreets house, Jez is sceptical. "Five per cent," he laughs. "I'd bet 95 per cent of his business comes from cannabis growers. Who the hell is going to spend £300 to grow tomatoes!" He lights a spliff well laced with home-grown "weed". "It's a sort of gardening," he muses, holding the joint betwixt thumb and forefinger and taking a deep draw. "But for me it's more like a religion."

Top-quality cannabis — but the electricity can cost as much as running seven tumble-driers

PHOTOGRAPHS: JASON TILLEY

Zap, bong you're gone in wheeze of virtual war

What could be more fun than tank battles with your mates in some virgin wilderness? DAVID FAIRHALL went along for the ride on the army's £50 million Canadian playground

A STROBE light on the turret of the Challenger tank lurking in a fold of the Canadian prairie suddenly starts flashing. Hatches open and the crew come tumbling out, exasperated that for them the war game is over.

The flashing light means their tank has been hit, not by a shell but by a "weapons effect simulator". One of the "enemy's" armoured vehicles, dressed up with a drain pipe to suggest the silhouette of a Russian T-80 tank, has hit the Challenger's responder with a laser beam. Or perhaps one of the enemy infantry's anti-tank missile teams, hidden amongst the high grass, has managed to get the Challenger in its laser sights. To discover if they have survived and what damage has been done, the tank crew open their sealed "vehicle damage card" and their individual "casualty cards". The commander has had a hand blown off — you can see that because the little picture of a soldier on the card is missing a hand, and it says that "blood is pumping from the artery". Another crew member has lost a foot.

Lots of work here for the medical teams, who are also playing this game as realistically as possible. It's much simpler for them when the casualty card just has a big cross on it — "You are dead. Lie Down."

War games have come a long way since the days when a young Nicholas Soames — formerly of the Royal Hussars, now Armed Forces Minister and in charge of all this — was last on manoeuvres. "If the umpire said you were dead," he recalled as he watched the modern army at work in Alberta, "you just ran over him." (And soldiers really have been run over and killed by tanks on the range, although safety rules have been tightened after a series of deaths last year.)

But there are still umpires of a sort. Now their main role is not so much deciding who has been hit as helping the control staff set up a satisfactorily bloody battle. Only occasionally do they use their "God gun" to despatch soldiers who refuse to lie down.

The laser equipment is known in the army jargon as a DFWES (Direct Fire Weapons Effect Simulator). Every soldier has one fitted to his rifle or machine gun. Aimed at an "enemy" soldier's helmet or torso, it triggers a buzzer, which will not stop until the man lies down on his back — or cheats by disconnecting it.

Similar equipment fitted to missile launchers and tank cannons will put a vehicle out of action — by starting the flashing light and switching off its communications.

On the Suffield range, a thousand square miles of arid prairie otherwise occupied only by coyotes and rattlesnakes, the system enables two armoured battle groups to manoeuvre against each other with remarkable realism. Only the blood is missing.

Once the significance of this omission sinks in, even the most cautious young trainee commander acquires the verve of a Rommel or a Patton. Everybody can join in, but nobody really gets hurt, even if some bold outflanking ends in a disastrous ambush. They become "DFWES brave".

The battle I watched, a needle match between two royal tank regiments, ended typically in what the chief controller Major Simon Allen summed up as "mutual annihilation". Both commanding officers were "killed". Just a few symbols, representing the battle groups' surviving remnants, lay scattered across the enormous map on which he shapes the war game. The major admits that five years after the end of the cold war, his enemy forces still look suspiciously like an old Soviet formation. His excuse is that "we need to train against a first division enemy".

The range costs the British taxpayer about £50 million a year. The soldiers think it's worth every penny. It is the only place where a full battle group can currently train in such realistic fashion for a conflict of the Gulf war variety — a capability Nicholas Soames maintains is vital to Britain's security.

But simply roaring across the prairie would serve little purpose in itself. It is the combination of open space and DFWES laser equipment which produces the training value. Lasers are also used back home on Salisbury Plain, but there the tanks are constrained by roads, villages, archaeological sites, rare butterflies and the vulnerable texture of the topsoil.

When real shells are fired instead of simulators, things get even more difficult. There is so little room on Salisbury Plain they have to be fired across the A345 road which bisects the training area — an alarming technique that can no longer be used for the army's new rocket artillery, since bits tend to fall off in flight. Hence the MoD's bid to make more use of the Otterburn moors near Newcastle, much to the anguish of the Northumberland national park committee.

The fact is that after generations spent defending a far-flung empire or fighting the cold war in Germany, the army is coming home, and bringing its dirty tanks and noisy guns with it. By the end of the year, 72 per cent of our soldiers will be based in the UK, the largest peacetime proportion for a century.

The MoD's planners have come up with several answers to their problem. Inevitably, the army will make much heavier use of ranges here, though it is also looking at possibilities in eastern Europe, where governments put a higher priority on earning hard currency than the environment. And the army is also buying lots of simulators to replace live firing and to add realism to its war games. They will never recreate real war, though perhaps one day it could become a bloodless substitute for it.

Marriage of inconvenience

BEFORE the days of the Pill, men got married for sex and women for security ('Moralist' MPs kill family Bill, November 3). Provided both were available the marriage was deemed successful. Nowadays, men (and women) can have sex whenever they feel like it and women can make their own security.

I am surprised that so many people decide to marry/set up home together. The only advantage I can see is to share the bringing up of their children and they should stick by each other until that job is done. A promise to love someone for the rest of one's life is a foolish one: a promise to care for one's offspring is one that everyone should be prepared to make and society help to keep.
Pat Penney.
Garden St,
Bollington,
Macclesfield,
Cheshire SK10 5JQ.

THE MPs who killed off the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill need to ask themselves why it is that so many women are prepared to accept poverty and hardship rather than remain within their marriages.

Around one in four women experience domestic violence. The 1992 North London Survey, funded by the Department of the Environment, indicated that of the 571 women surveyed, 32 per cent had experienced domestic violence. Around 45 per cent of female homicide victims are killed by present or former partners. Around 100 women each year die in this way.

In the face of this distressing picture, it is obscene and irrelevant to suggest that denying protection to unmarried women will protect the institution of marriage.
Jean Calder.
The Women's Refuge Project,
P O Box 889,
Brighton, BN1 4DP.

THE debate on marriages has not covered one very important issue: the right of two consenting adults to have sexual relations and live together without the moral, emotional and financial commitment that marriage entails. This is an important right that is steadily being eroded in the name of protecting unmarried women who want the protection marriage gives.

All single people have the right to have short-term sexual relationships without being financially responsible for each other. If I die during the course of a temporary sexual relationship, I have the right to know that my property will be inherited by the people who are important to me: my children, brothers, my best friend.

If I want my lover to inherit, I am at liberty to make provision for him in my will but the convenient domestic arrangement of having one's lover living and sleeping in the same house should not be confused with the profound commitment of marriage.
Jean Molloy.
Theodore Road,
Hither Green,
London SE13.

I HAVE two sons, both with children. One is married, the other not. In each partnership there is devotion to one another and to the children. Each is part of an extended, loving family which regards them no differently because one has marriage vows and the other personal commitment alone.
Shirley Meredeen.
Highbury Place,
London N5.

THERE is a simple answer to David Allsopp's question (Letters, November 2) about why the Tories, who are so keen on family values, deny paternity leave. They see real families, with all their contradictions and untidinesses, as threatening. They want to use legislation to restore the ideologically correct family of their own childhoods: breadwinner father absent from the home for long hours, home-based mother who subordinates her needs to care for their children and is economically dependent on him so that divorce will never be sought by either of them.
Lynne Sheridan.
Ashborne,
Warwickshire CV35.

THERE are two glaring inconsistencies in the marriage/divorce laws both as existing, and as proposed by Lord Mackay (Holy alliance thwarted Mackay, November 3). It is harder to get divorced than to get married. As both are equally big steps in a person's life, should not they be equally easy or equally difficult?

Lord Mackay proposes a wait of 12 months for no-fault divorce yet you can get married with around two weeks' notice in a registry office, no questions asked. Furthermore, the Government does not force people to get married in the first place, so why should it force people to stay married against their will?

Lord Mackay is also proposing to virtually force people to go through conciliation procedures before getting divorced yet people are not forced to take counselling or advice before they get married. To make divorce more difficult than marriage implies that being married is morally superior to being single or divorced.

I would favour two weeks' notice, no-fault divorce, subject to sorting out problems with children and finances. All that is achieved by making divorce complicated is lots of money for the legal profession. Although admittedly Lord Mackay's proposals for conciliation might reduce this and create jobs for counsellors and arbitrators in stead.
Marc Hurstfield.
74 Fountain Walk,
Northfleet,
Gravesend, Kent DA11 9LA.

East, west, union's best

THE article by Will Hutton and Martin Kettle about the future of the EU (Winds over the West, November 2) was as excellent as it was belated. Theirs are precisely the arguments I voiced as my reasons for voting against the Maastricht Treaty in Parliament in 1992-93. Some people denounced me as a rightwinger at the time, so it is encouraging that mainstream progressive opinion is now catching up.

The unfeasible dream of a single currency, and the dubious goal of further "integration" are totally incompatible with the greater imperative of widening EU membership to the east. We must face this squarely. The alternative is a *rich man's club which the* new democracies will never be able to afford to join.
Nick Harvey MP.
House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA.

MESSRS Hutton and Kettle work from a base ignoring reality to conclusions that embrace defeat. Historically, as a reading of Monnet, *Schuman et al shows, the motives* of the EC/EU founding fathers were not rooted in the cold war but in the experiences at destructive intra-European conflicts in the first half of the century that destroyed Europe's position in the world.

The petering out of the cold war leaves us in Europe unveiled to harsh and uncomfortable global realities — zooming populations in other continents, impatient of deprivation, new economic centres of power, uncertain terms of trade, rival demands upon finite resources and impacts on a fragile environment, their political expression laced with ethnic and religious passions.

We from Europe can neither contend nor contribute if we do not build an effective organisation of our own power to function in the world. Do Hutton and Kettle look contentedly to a future of accepting willy-nilly what the US, the Far East and the oil masters impose on us?

We are at the end of an epoch in which sovereign national states could fulfil a *useful purpose for us: the chal*lenge is evolutionary leap or decline into downfall.
Raymond le Goy.
Whits End, Mill Lane,
Harbledown, Canterbury,
Kent CT2 8NQ.

I CANNOT agree with the contention of Will Hutton and Martin Kettle that "only associate membership can be *offered to eastern and central* Europe". It is precisely full membership for all former Eastern Bloc states that could bring about the realistic approach towards the European integration they favour. None of the current Eastern European states has an economy strong enough to be part of the process of economic and monetary union. Why not, therefore, fashion a new agenda for European co-operation, geared to improving the position of economically backward countries by providing them with trading opportunities?
Walter Cairns.
Broomhurst Hall,
836 Wilmslow Road,
Manchester M20 8RP.

WHILE broadly supporting John Palmer's position in the great Guardian Euro-split (Let's have no EU retreat, November 3), I do not think he needs to defend the Maastricht criteria. The empirical evidence is that UK unemployment has tended to be lower with inflation a little higher than the current targets: thus the average number *unemployed was 445,000 from* 1946-1975 with Keynesian demand management policies, compared with an average 2.5 million since 1980 under tough-on-inflation monetarist policies, and two million in the 1930s. There was also higher growth in the Keynesian period.

European leaders are constantly bewailing the stub*born failure of unemployment* to respond to their policies, but keep insisting that inflation targets must be tightened. This is a re-run of 1930s' economic policy. Britain should use the Intergovernmental Conference to build flexibility into the convergence criteria.
Lynne Armstrong.
18 Stanley Avenue,
Baffins,
Portsmouth PO3 6PN.

JACUB Barborik's attack on the Slovak prime minster, Vladimir Meciar (Meciar reverts to the bad old Eastern Bloc habits, November 1), rehashes all the standard abuse spread by his local rivals. These have now been taken up in a *démarche* from European Union. Disappointed foreign financiers also enjoy Meciar-baiting. But the majority of Slovaks keep electing him partly because he questions the probity of past privatisations.

The Slovak opposition is an unholy alliance of ex-communists and ex-dissidents who seem to feel that they have a natural right to rule. In two general elections, Meciar's supporters have routed them. *Yet each time machinations* behind the scenes start up to reverse the verdict of the polls.

Does Meciar's Slovakia really deserve its bad press? Hungary's Prime Minster Gyula Horn is in Britain receiving plaudits from John Major's government and the EBRD for his market reform but unlike Hungary, Slovakia enjoys low inflation, and a *trade and budget surplus*. Slovakia is the smallest of the four Central European applicants for EU and Nato membership. Undermining it may weaken the stability of its neighbours which might be welcome to opponents in Brussels of expansion of either organisation.
Mark Almond.
Oriel College,
Oxford OX1 4EW.

Why BskyB is the limit when the Church dabbles with Mammon

THE Methodist Church is not as simple-minded as William Oddie suggests (Miss Bennet and Playboy Television, November 2), when it makes decisions about investments.

The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church has a legal duty to seek the best returns which are prudently possible from its investments, in order to further the work of the Church. At the same time, our portfolio is constantly under review from an ethical standpoint.

However, we do not assume that there are ethically pure investments which "exclude any chance of involving original sin". We weigh the good which accrues to society from *a successful well-run business* and the products it sells, against the harm which may follow from some of its activities. Occasionally we find the balance has tipped too far in a negative direction; we then disinvest.

Ever since the establishment of an investment unit over 20 years ago we have employed professional fund man*agers who have been commit*ted to grappling with the sometime conflicting aims of maximum return and moral responsibility. To assist the Church's in depth examination of investment ethics, which Mr Oddie favours, a committee was set up as long ago as 1983 both to advise the investment professionals and to deliver an annual report to *the Methodist Conference.*

The Methodist Church has, of course, not just discovered what Rupert Murdoch promotes. But, unlike Mr Oddie, we can tell the difference between the Sun newspaper and the Playboy Channel.
(Rev) David G Deeks.
Co-ordinating Secretary,
Church and Society,
The Methodist Church,
25 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5JR.

WILLIAM Oddie talks about "the sexual obsession of the late-20th century". But this is nothing new. The Church, especially the more Pauline than Christian branch which Mr Oddie has joined, has been characterised for many centuries by its pervasive sexual obsessions. Indeed, much of its socially destructive power has been derived from the suppression of healthy sexual attitudes and activities.

This sexual power, to which Freud refers and which the Church has traditionally blocked and exploited, may be damned but cannot be damned indefinitely. Sooner or later it bursts out into sexual aberrations at the individual level (not least among priests) and into pogroms, crusades and general strife.
Philip Lloyd Lewis.
57f Mallard Road,
Bournemouth BH8 9PJ.

WILLIAM Oddie writes of the "battle between the forces of sexual discipline and sexual liberation". But discipline is not opposed to liberation; for in a society of adults surely we should aspire to be both free and disciplined. I assume therefore he is referring to a battle between sexual oppression and sexual liberation, which is rather different.

This may also explain why he is concerned about the gay and lesbian movements within the churches, which would seem to me to have nothing to do with sexual stimulation on BSkyB, but is rather about whether we respect people's choice of sexual partners. This is an ill-considered piece of anti-sex polemic.
Peter Reason.
Bloomfield Crescent,
Bath BA2 2BE.

AM I alone in thinking that the fact that the Church of England had a £3.6 million stake in BSkyB is astonishing and morally indefensible? The Church should be condemned outright for investing in such businesses to begin with. If it must dabble with Mammon, surely it could do so with a company that at least attempts to run its affairs in an ethical way.
David James.
1 Linch Farm, Wytham,
Oxford OX2 8QP.

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In a right state

MR PONSONBY of the D-Notice Committee (Letters, October 19) is being oversensitive. Andy McNab's book Immediate Action *did* go through the D-Notice procedure even though it may not have crossed *his desk*. When Bravo Two Zero went to the D-Notice Committee the publishers were put in contact with the Directorate of Public Relations (Army). With Immediate Action the publishers went direct to the same MoD Directorate. My criticism is not of the D-Notice Committee itself but of the way the MoD saw fit to behave when a book was voluntarily sent to them to ensure that nothing was published which would damage national security. Nothing could be more likely to undermine confidence in a voluntary vetting system.
David Hooper.
Gresham Street,
London EC2V 7BU.

I WAS surprised to learn from the Fellow and Programme Director of Templeton College (Letters, October 31) that the course for Labour Shadow Cabinet Members involved a number of recently retired Permanent Secretaries and other senior civil servants.

If the programme was concerned with management of change in government, I *should have thought that* these people were part of the problem, not the solution.
Paul Twyman.
Thrift House, Minnis Road,
Birchington, Kent.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk.

Not what the Sun says

MARTIN Linton argues that the Sun won the last election for the Tories by producing an 8 per cent swing in its readers away from Labour (October 30). To accept this, we have to assume that voting *intentions are determined* simply by what your newspaper tells you. In which case, we would expect that the Sun had not supported the Conservatives up until the election yet then changed. This is not the case. TV is the main supplier of information.

Our own research shows that the message which damaged Labour was carried in both right- and leftwing papers, and on television. The Guardian on its front page (March 26, 1992) had reported that huge sums of privately owned wealth would leave the country in the event of a Labour victory. The consequences would be a falling exchange rate and higher interest rates. Labour lost largely because it did not contest and win the crucial area of how it would control the economy.

Linton's thesis implies that the only way Labour can win is by appeasing the rightwing press. This is unfortunate since Labour could only do so by adopting Conservative economic policies. But if they do this, when in power they will inherit the same problems *of economic instability*, unemployment and job insecurity.
Greg Philo.
Research Director,
Glasgow University
Media Unit,
61 Southpark Avenue,
Glasgow G12 8LF.

SO wot if it was "The Sun wot won the election" (Leader, November 1)? As a defender of British democracy, the British press undoubtedly shapes as well as reports on political matters. For that reason, newspapers are more lively than broadcast media in their political reporting — because they can be.

Your suggestion that the Great British Press should carry the equivalent of party election broadcasts would dilute its greatest strength — that it is so diverse and openly politically aligned — and would not reverse the healthy trends of partisan political reporting.

From a newspaper's point of view, the extra revenue from guaranteed political advertising near an election is obviously attractive.

But readers won't be persuaded.
Chris Reed.
210 New North Road,
London N1.

Ill treatment

ONCE again we have been told that early diagnosis is vital in the treatment of cancer (Plea to promote special treatment for cancer, November 1). But it is obvious that if your ailment is detected a year sooner, you must inevitably live a year longer from the date of diagnosis, even with no treatment at all.

The fact is that early diagnosis always improves the survival statistics; whether it always improves the patient is another matter altogether.
David Bick.
Pound House,
Newent,
Gloucester GL18 1PS.

Split to infinity

MANY people do not understand that Quebec is already a sovereign state. It derives its sovereignty from exactly the same place that Canada derives hers, the British North America Act of 1867, an act of the British parliament.

Quebec has its own parliament, can raise its own taxes, and enjoys unfettered authority over most of the matters which concern ordinary people: education, health and welfare, police, civil law and municipal government.

In addition, Quebec dominates the politics of Canada itself. Both the Prime Minister of Canada and the leader of the Opposition are both Quebecois. (This leads to the fascinating point that if Quebec separated, both would cease to be Canadians and their constituencies would vanish.)

So where is the beef? M Parizeau said it all when blaming the ethnic minorities for the *separatist defeat. For M Pari*zeau and many of his followers, the issue has always gone beyond that of constitutional powers or even language — it is blood. Of course the "ethnic minorities" voted against separation. There is hope in the fact that many "real Quebecois" voted with them.

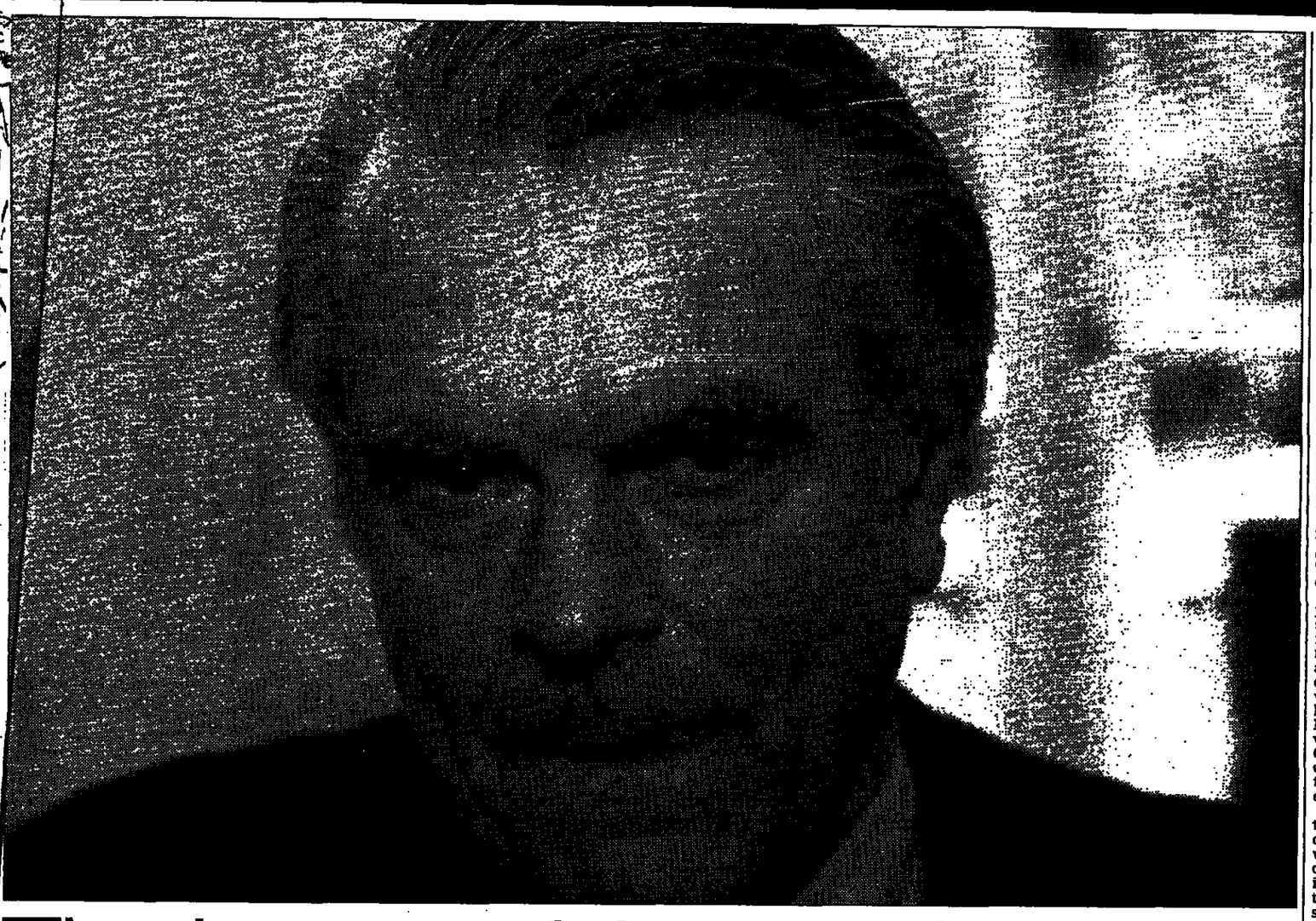
The advantages for Quebec remaining in the Canadian confederation are manifest. It enjoys both unbridled power at home and a disproportional influence on the rest of Canada.

However, events in the former Yugoslavia have shown that when the blood instinct is stirred, logic is first to suffer.
Sheldon Greenberg.
capantic@dircon.co.uk

A Country Diary

MACHYNLLETH: If one morning you find acres of dew-covered ground glistening white in the sun because carpeted by millions of silken threads, what you are seeing is that wonder of nature, a field of gossamer. I hardly need tell you that our dear old clergyman naturalist, Gilbert White of Selborne, described these gossamer threads beautifully. In September, 1775, he wrote: "Strange and superstitious as the notions about these were formerly, nobody in these days doubts but they are the real production of small spiders which swarm in the fields in fine weather in autumn and have a power of shooting out webs from their tails so as to render them buoyant and lighter than air." Gilbert was puzzled why these myriads of tiny black spiders should want to take off on their airborne cruises. To explain it, some modern experts have talked about an urge to disperse in order to avoid overcrowding. But this seems strange, because with spiders as hugely abundant as these, surely in many places they are likely to find just as much overcrowding as that which they are trying to escape from. Whatever the truth, the fact remains that, once the urge takes them, they give up a comfortable lifestyle tucked up under their webs amongst the grass and commit themselves to a life of adventure. When they set off, each spider hauled by its little silken sail, they probably think they are merely nipping over the hedge into the next field. But what sometimes happens is that they get lifted *high into* the sky and are carried for hundreds of miles. They have been known to come down on high mountains, remote islands and ships at sea. It may seem a risky way of going on and it would not suit most of us. But I daresay that spiders, since they have eight eyes, never have seen things quite the way we do.

WILLIAM CONDRY



The image of the nearly man

David Owen was not able to deliver peace in Bosnia, but with startling timing his book is published as the warring parties convene in Ohio. Photograph by GRAHAM TURNER

The MEGAN TRESIDDER INTERVIEW

FOR A man who said this summer that he had had enough of Bosnia, David Owen has a funny way of showing it. Five months after he retired as the European Union's negotiator in former Yugoslavia and announced his relief, after three years, to be able to walk "into the sunset", Lord Owen is back. Next week, his book, Balkan Odyssey, will be launched with a press conference, and an accompanying CD-Rom. It is being touted as an account of history in the making but, as the title shows, it is a peculiarly subjective account. And the timing is delicious. He finished the book on October 12, the day the latest ceasefire was announced, and after a rush printing job, it is being published at the same time as the Americans are hosting the peace talks in Ohio. Owen's sunset seems a rather dazzling one.

He lives in Limehouse but his office is in Queen Anne's Gate, near Westminster. Owen works in an enormous tall-ceilinged room, an Apple Mac on his desk, political biographies on one side, and photographs of his literary agent wife, Debbie, and their three children, on the other. On the walls are a couple of modern still lifes, a picture of his old boarding school and a Victorian cartoon about Effrontery and Humility.

Lord Owen is said to have none of the latter. Barbara Castle calls him arrogant in her memoirs. Roy Jenkins compares him to the Upas tree, which destroys life around it. Denis Healey said the good fairy gave Owen looks and intellect but that the bad fairy made him a shit — though Healey has also said, contradictorily, that Owen's arrogance is a disguise, to hide his insecurity at being promoted so young in politics.

After six years working as a doctor (as was his father), he became MP for Plymouth at 28, a junior minister in health at 30, and Jim Callaghan's Foreign Secretary at the ridiculously young age of 38. It was at the Foreign Office that he became known for his withering verbal attacks, scrawling "balls!" or "rubbish!" in the margins of his colleagues' papers. "I am certainly abrasive," he concedes. Today, he is relatively mild. There is just one "bullshit!" and one "nonsense!" — when I suggest he wants to be chairman of the BBC. "Nonsense! I don't wish to be in public service any more."

He is, at 57, charismatic and a charmer, who exploits the watchability of his own face. He is rarely without his famous twisted smile — which is both wicked and smug. He smiles when you ask him about his arrogance, and positively grins when you suggest that he might have been less rude to the Americans over Bosnia. When he talks, he is engagingly direct, but his permanent triumphalist expression does him no favours and probably goes far to explain why Owen is unfairly attacked — as he often was during his stint as Bosnia's peacebroker — and why there wasn't a stampede of supporters to defend him.

Owen denies he wrote his book to reply to his critics. No, he merely wanted to write a history of the crisis and history is clearly on his side. "Now, sometimes," he says, "it takes 10, 20, maybe 50 years before history shows whether you were right or wrong. But the justification for the Vance/ Owen plan was, I would say, clear within six months, certainly two years! It's as clear as daylight that it should have been supported."

Instead, Clinton refused the military muscle to back it in 1993, the Serbs then rejected it and American and German commentators piled in, accusing Owen and Vance of being "appeasers", giving in too easily to Milosevic, the Serbian president, and ceding the Serbs' territorial gains in order to secure a quick peace.

"I think it is such an absurd allegation," Owen says, "that there is no need to reply to it. It was an outrageous calumny. We were fighting to convince Milosevic of the need for UN through-ways, to allow human rights monitors in to ensure people went back to their homes, to reverse ethnic cleansing."

Owen admits he made mistakes but they are detailed, technical ones: a delayed meeting here, a demand too far there. He admits to no mistakes in general strategy. Not even when he sounded off against the Americans when he was only six months into the job? Wasn't that a mistake?

"I don't think so really," Owen says. He agrees it "probably" ruined his relationship with Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, "but I don't think that is such a tremendous shame. We knew what was going on in the Clinton administration, that they were haunted by the fear of being Carter Mark II. We had to defend the plan. But it wasn't just me saying these things. I was the vehicle for the European Union." Every decision, every acre of land he negotiated with Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, had to be reported back and approved.

His book is strangely unrevealing about his emotions. "Having controlled myself for three years I decided not to open up in the book about the personalities of the parties involved. Though I think it becomes clear I did have difficulty with Karadzic. He became coarser during the war. There were steely moments," he adds, "but I think in politics you learn to put up with people and policies you don't like."

> 'If you mean that I am not Prime Minister . . . well, it would have been nice, but it doesn't burn me up'

Owen has the grace to look a tiny bit abashed at this point, knowing that in politics, he has put up with very little. In 1972 he resigned from the opposition front bench over Labour's Common Market policy. In 1981 he and the Gang of Four left the Labour Party to form the SDP and he left it in 1987 in protest at merger with the Liberals. Bryan Gould once said the logic of Owen's career suggested that one day he would found another country. Healey calls him Lord Owen of Split.

His admirers argue that his defection from Labour forced the party into the rethink that has led to Blair. His detractors say that he weakened the efforts of his Labour colleagues to deal with the far left in the party. "That's a view," Owen says. "There are different ways of fighting a corner. I always said to those who urged me to stay that I wasn't in the same position as them. I had been Foreign Secretary. I had taken positions on the membership of the European Union. I had taken views on Trident, on nuclear policy, on the market economy. I think for me, having been in an exposed position, it was different."

Owen's devotion to ideas, rather than parties, has earned him a reputation as a political loner. Lord Jenkins put it more antagonistically, advising Owen to ponder why he "sooner or later quarrelled with everyone with whom he was politically closely associated".

Had Owen pondered it? "I don't think it is true," he says. "The people who put their trust in the SDP I haven't fallen out with. The people who never joined the Liberals or went back to the Labour Party have no argument with me. I don't think I have fallen out with everybody. I retain friendships with people who were in the SDP. And it's not easy," he says, returning to Bosnia, "to keep the trust of 15 European countries and by and large I did."

And what does he think of the label he is given, as the nearly man of politics?

Owen adopts a position of extreme languor at the question, swinging his loafers over the side of his chair. "If you mean that I am not Prime Minister," he says, ". . . well, it would have been nice, but it doesn't burn me up. The right way to have become PM would have been not to leave the Labour Party. Not that I am saying I would have been if I had stayed . . ."

But does he look at Blair and think, "It could have been me"?

"Well, I think it helps actually," he says, now fiddling with his socks, "that he is a completely different generation." Whether Owen supports Blair, he won't say. Party politics are behind him, he says, now he's in the Lords.

So now he sits as a crossbencher and is looking for non-executive directorships in business. He is already on the board of the British textiles company, Coats Viyella, whose knitwear brochure is on the coffee table between us. From Bosnia to knitwear? "We are not only talking about knitwear," he corrects me. "It is a very major international company, the biggest thread manufacturer in the world. It's a serious industry, textiles. I am learning a lot about trade agreements and enjoying it."

He says that he believes that peace in Bosnia will be achieved round the table in Ohio. "The withdrawals have taken place on the ground. It's a soldiers' map. They are all exhausted. Milosevic holds the casting vote for the Serbs and I know he wants a settlement."

Clinton has said this is the closest anyone has got to peace since the war began. "He is probably right," Owen says. "I think we could have got to peace a lot earlier — in February 1993 if the Americans had been prepared to back it. Frankly, it would have been a far better settlement . . . but at least we have peace. It's a pretty miserable peace but it is peace."

Historians will argue for years over whether Owen is being too simplistic in his assessment of what he and Cy Vance might have achieved. But his detractors also oversimplified with their armchair accusations of appeasement. Now his book will be criticised for a partial, self-exculpating view. It is certainly riven with a sense of self-righteousness, and the conviction that no other argument but his was right.

"Maybe," he says, shrugging. "People don't write books to prove they are wrong."

Balkan Odyssey is published by Gollancz at £20.

Log on, tap in, be a cyberpunk, drop out and die

IAN KATZ tries to quiz Dr Timothy Leary about mortality on the Internet

TIMOTHY LEARY — the professional iconoclast who urged a generation to "tune in, turn on, drop out" — is dying. Given his world-famous contempt for societal norms, it is hardly surprising that he's doing it differently from most people: very publicly and with some relish. But one aspect of Leary's long goodbye is baffling even by the standards of his own, frequently obscure, logic. Dr Tim, 74, has said he plans to die on the World Wide Web.

The former Harvard psychology professor's enthusiasm for joyriding on the information highway is not new. With his evangelistic advocacy of hallucinogenic drug use now looking somewhat outdated, he declared last year that "the PC is the LSD of the nineties". He even wrote a book, Chaos And Cyber-Culture, which supposedly established his credentials as a cyberpunk, whatever that might be.

He had not then announced to the world that his prostate cancer was terminal, but he was clearly giving the subject of death plenty of thought. "It is beginning to look as though, in the information society, individual human beings can script, produce, and direct their own hybernation and re-animation," he wrote, as ever authentically enigmatic. "Dying becomes a team sport."

He went on to talk about "a broad spectrum of Club-Med post-biologic possibilities", of avoiding the "dark night or the neon-lit, Muzak-enhanced Disney-Heaven of the Jesus Corporation", of "installing your own pre-mortem plan for immortality". But to the precise question of what he meant by dying on the Web, he offered no answer.

An obvious place to look for an explanation was the Web itself. Dr Leary has his own home page: http//:leary.com. Feed the address into your Internet navigator and, after a few minutes of humming and whirring, an other-wordly photograph of the great man appears. He is sporting a crimson and yellow waistcoat and peering mystically into a cloud of smoke from what may or may not be a cigarette.

"Hello and welcome to my home," he says when the mouse is clicked on his image. On a "guided tour" of his Beverly Hills home (the actual real estate is next door to Rod Stewart's), he explains that the visitor can sample the "never-ending cyber-party" in the "living room" or drop in to any one of four other "rooms" which offer everything from extracts from his personal diaries to "samples from our musician and actor friends who dropped by to chat".

But in the living-room I found only an Australian and a Japanese chap discussing Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow, and in the cyber-room, only ever more detailed photographs of a pair of white sofas and the view through a glass door on to a pretty patio. When I sought more information, I was given the facts that a picture on the wall of a big red pair of lips was by Aileen Getty, "a great artist and a wonderful person". Nothing about Internet mortality.

The only answer, it seemed, was to ask Dr Tim directly. His "manager", Siobhan Cys, was doubtful about the possibility of a face-to-face meeting but warmed to the idea of a rendezvous in cyberspace. Leary was giving cyber-lectures using something called an ISDN line, now that he was becoming too frail to travel, she explained. It might help to promote them. He also had a new "album" out, called The Right To Fly.

So after several days of negotiations and much talk of "setup" with Dr Leary's techno-sidekick, Chris Graves, we both logged into a "private room" on the commercial service America On-line. Dr Leary was using the logon of his son Zach, whose "user profile" helpfully revealed that he was single, a music student and enjoyed "contemplating chaos".

I asked Dr Leary to describe where he was. The reply seemed to take an age: "I'm in our study, with my son Zach and my partners Abbot and Costello (laughs), otherwise known as Joey and Chis, and we're all laughing pretty fast." Why laughing, I wondered? "Why? Why, where, when, off / on. Yes? No?" came the reply, several minutes later.

Leary might be renowned for his anarchic style but the "conversation" was clearly not going well. I thought it best to cut to the chase. "How long did he have to live?" I wondered (in the most tactful way it is possible to wonder such a thing). "Between seven months and seven years," came the reply, a little quicker this time. "I'll try to accommodate."

Even perched on this technological cutting edge (OK, somewhat blunted edge), the delay between each of us typing a sentence and it appearing in the "private room" made the interview only slightly more immediate than exchanging messages by carrier pigeons. Or possibly cleft sticks. Dr Leary seemed irritable. I blurted: "What did it mean 'to die on the Web'?"

"Well, I've started doing it this very minute!," came the delighted reply. "We're doing it right now." And then he was gone.

Secrets of the killing cells are unlocked

CHRIS MIHILL reports on the latest developments in the fight against cancer — as discussed at a major medical conference on the subject in Paris last week

ONE in three people in Britain will have a cancer diagnosed during their lives. One in four of us will die from cancer. There are 300,000 new cases of cancer a year, and 165,000 deaths. But four out of 10 cancers can now be cured and the lives of those who have many of the other kinds can be significantly extended. Advances have been made: 40 years ago virtually no cancers were curable; 20 years ago childhood leukaemia, testicular cancer and Hodgkin's disease were certain killers. Now 70-90 per cent of these cases can be cured.

Most researchers are convinced that the biological revolution of the past 15 years, working on the genetic secrets of cells, will discover the mechanisms of cancers and devise new ways to switch off these processes. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund, whose chief scientists were prominent at an international conference in Paris this week, has recently published a "vision" document looking at the next 25 years of cancer treatment. Its predictions are based on what is available now and what may be soon.

Cancer deaths will increase to 220,000 in those 25 years according to current trends because the population is ageing and cancer is predominantly a disease of old age. But this increase could be cut by a third with initiatives against three of the most common cancers — lung, bowel and breast.

Jack Cuzick, the ICRF's chief statistician, explains: "By 2020, efforts that have led to the recent ti op in cigarette-smoking could cut lung cancer deaths by 30 per cent. Deaths from bowel cancer could be cut by 40 per cent with increasingly sophisticated methods for screening. Preventive drugs for women at high risk of breast cancer might prevent 25 per cent of deaths. Screening, drug or hormone treatments and surgery for women with early disease could prevent up to a third of deaths in women who *do* develop breast cancer."

Sending patients to specialist units could markedly improve survival: studies suggest this approach could cut deaths by 10 per cent a year — an extra 16,000 lives. The Government has recently endorsed the idea of specialist centres and some health authorities already only pay for care from expert doctors and refuse to send patients to others with poor treatment records.

Karol Sikora, the ICRF's deputy director of research, is optimistic about progress: gradually we will see more potential cancers being prevented or identified when the patient has early, easily treatable, pre-cancerous changes in cells. This will have an enormous impact on deaths. The knowledge base built in research laboratories over the past 15 years is leading to new drug discoveries: some are in trials already, and there will be many more starting in the next decade.

"These drugs will not just be the result of screening many compounds, as in the past, but will be based on logical drug design, using molecular graphics to produce novel structures, designed to interfere with the specific biological processes of cancer."

The Paris conference considered stopping cancer cells spreading by enhancing the effects of the molecule glues which hold cells together but which are weakened by cancer. Researchers are considering ways of sending around the bloodstream a harmless chemical which turns aggressive only when it encounters cancer cells. One such process is already in existence. Other scientists believe it may be possible to change cancer cells so that the body's immune system registers them as foreign and attacks them. Other techniques include switching off the blood supply to tumours, so that they starve to death. There is much excitement about blocking pathways to cancer cells, so that they do not receive the hormones they need to divide and grow; also about enhancing or reinforcing the body's own genetic cancer "policemen". Such genes have the power to repair cancerous changes or tell very badly damaged cells to self-destruct. Previously, it was thought that a massive uncontrolled growth of cells caused cancer — but now it is increasingly believed that it is the failure of damaged cells to self-destruct that is the real problem, and research is going on into ways to restore or enhance this.

THERE is also much work on preventing the processes that make existing drugs ineffective. Highly toxic drugs which could kill cells in major cancers, like lung cancer, usually fail because they are pumped out of the cells too quickly to cause damage: the idea is to turn off the pumping mechanism.

Further in the future, virtual reality techniques may allow a "walk around" inside tumours, giving much more detailed knowledge about how to treat them. Robotic surgery and radiotherapy will also increase, giving more accurate results, although as new drugs become available that can shrink tumours, surgery for many forms of cancer will be outdated.

Cancer may become a long-term condition to be managed with different interventions over time, rather than a disease where a five-year survival is seen as success.

More effort will be put into screening people using genetic information to identify those at high risk. Many epidemiologists believe that 80-90 per cent of cancers are caused by environmental factors, so if only these could be accurately identified, cancer could become an avoidable disease. Smoking causes a third of all cancers; a poor diet probably causes another third; and viruses trigger cancers. Twenty years ago that last fact was unknown; now we know one in five cancers has a viral link. Vaccines may immunise against such viruses.

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Festival review

Boston Kickout
Dir: Paul Hills

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

Mathieu Kassovitz's Hate may be the violent suburban saga that's attracted most Festival attention, but new British film Boston Kickout proves that any hell the Parisian *banlieue* can offer Stevenage can equal. Paul Hills's debut feature — a huge leap from his mid-length The Frontline — is a convincing answer to all those US independent films in which a bunch of buddies grow up to share beers and tears. There are plenty of both here, but cloaked in all the darkness and dreariness of New Town living. Four boys grow up playing the game of the title — a wildly anti-social pursuit which involves doing over the neighbours' gardens at lightning speed — only to learn, once they leave school, that they themselves are due for a kicking from life.

Central character Phil (John Simm) watches his friends go mad, or abroad, while he chooses between a romance with his Irish cousin (Emer McCourt) or joining a mad skinhead mate in some skulduggery. It's not an overly sophisticated film, and goes for the melodrama with head-down intent, but the performances are way above par for a low-budget British film. And for milking dramatic visual potential from an unrelentingly grey setting, Hills and photographer Roger Bonnici make a promising reach for the Loach league.

☐ Showing today, 4pm, Odeon West End. 0171-928 3232.

Jonathan Romney

Beat talk

POOR Virginia Bottomley. Even when the National Heritage Secretary doesn't show up, she receives a predictable reception — ritual booing. Such was the case at the London Film Festival's opening gala: BFI director, Wilf Stevenson, was making a nice, upbeat speech — advance sales for the festival better than they have ever been etc — when he happened to mention that he'd been showing Bottomley around the Museum of the Moving Image. Mere mention of her name was enough to set off the catcalls, causing Stevenson to stop in his tracks. With ministers about to go into battle with the Treasury, and with Stevenson hoping that Bottomley looks favourably upon film, it was perhaps just as well she wasn't present. Besides, we think she should be given a chance — *surely* she *has* to know more about film than her predecessor, Stephen Dorrell.

More popular but just as elusive was **Ralph Fiennes**, the star of the opening film, Strange Days. During the post-film dinner in the Cafe Royal, fully grown women — mostly journalists — became near-hysterical whenever his flowing locks appeared to be on the horizon. In fact he was standing ignored in a corner, freshly-shorn, looking like the lad from the Hovis ad.

Robert Yates

Today's hot tips

The Celluloid Closet (Odeon West End, 6.30pm). Intelligent documentary on the history and meaning of gay and lesbian images in the cinema. Fine, unexpected clips.

Streetlife (NFT 1, 11pm). Excellent Karl Francis film about a working-class mother struggling to cope with a new baby. Brilliant performance from Helen McCrory.

PHOTOMONTAGE: ROGER TOOTH

After architecture, Shakespeare. FAY WELDON celebrates Prince Charles's latest campaign while, below, JOANNA COLES finds him at home among the showbiz crowd

Born to play the king

GOD BLESS His Royal Highness! — and three cheers for the Prince of Wales, for He these days is Heritage and Heritage is He, and He has a good heart, even a Lion Heart. To join the arts establishment in their own game takes nerve. I say this not out of some folk-memory of the days when monarchs had absolute power and to carp at all meant out with your tongue or off with your head — I've no doubt that when Henry VIII composed a pretty tune the whole court gasped with delight and hailed him as magnificent — but because I mean it.

The first cheer because he's done it at all. The Prince of Wales, Robert Stephens and other luminaries from the Royal Shakespeare Company, of which the Prince is president, have made a choice selection of Shakespeare and produced it on cassette and CD entitled The Prince's Choice, and a Heritagey buy it is. It will find its way — I have no doubt, and very much hope, and this is the Prince's intention — into a hundred thousand homes where Royalty goes down a treat and Shakespeare rather less so. It will make converts. The cassette will sell in supermarkets, to the tourists who flock to the RSC and in Harrods too. But there is hope for us all. Proceeds go to the Prince's Trust. Shakespeare too, of course, comes up trumps: it doesn't matter what you do to him — he survives it.

The second cheer because the selection — like that of *Quality Street chocolates* — is good, varied, and not at all what one would expect. There are some set pieces: Uneasy Lies The Head That Wears A Crown, The Seven Ages Of Man, and so on. But they are set, after all, because they are so remarkable.

The problem many of us have with Shakespeare, of course, is that he was "set" at school, and our response to The Works is often dutiful at best, gritted-teeth-boredom at worst, and if the Prince of Wales puts his imprimatur on certain passages yet more meaning will drain from them — but that's our problem, not his. Alan Bates's version of Enobarbus's "The Barge She Sat In . . ." from Antony And Cleopatra sends shivers down the spine.

An audio book version of Shakespeare is totally appropriate. Shakespeare, the radio dramatists among us like to think, was the first radio writer. Go to the new version of the Globe and you'll realise the plays were meant to be listened to as much as watched. You can hardly see the stage from the pit: the audience used its ears as much as its eyes; Shakespeare wrote accordingly — the texts contain their own magnificent descriptions of what's going on.

The actors do seem slightly overwhelmed by the occasion and some do tend to ham it up a bit. The music that heralds the Prince's introductions is School of Heritage Triumphant — a mixture of fanfare, Stephen Spielberg and 2001: much synthesised, using instruments unknown to man, placed somewhere between cello and bassoon. It boomed, with the Prince and Shakespeare, through the house on and on into the night. It was so much itself, I loved it.

The third cheer is for His Royal Highness himself who plays the part of Prince Hal to Robert Stephens's Falstaff (an admirable piece of type-casting) and does creditably enough, though one suspects from his delivery he will turn out to be a Thinking not a Warrior Monarch. But this Prince of ours is a brave and honourable man, who holds his nose and jumps into murky and unfriendly pools and strikes bravely out to shore, in the arts as well as in his emotional life. He can get it wrong (eg architecture) but he's not bad on his Shakespeare, and certainly behaves better to Di than Henry VIII ever did to Anne Boleyn.

One searches this selection for a self-portrait — one can't help it — and finds it, in the Public Life And Leadership section. (In a solidly thoughtful kind of royal way, the Prince introduces the various sections: All Sorts And Conditions Of Men, The Darker Side, and so on.) Henry V is his favourite of the historical plays. There's "Uneasy Lies The Head That Wears A Crown", and "But For Ceremony, Such A Wretch" and a very male, slightly Gordonstouny, stiff-upper-lippy, melancholy view of his own situation in the world. But then there's the burst of sudden Batesian lushness in Anthony and Cleopatra:

"other women,
Cloy th'appetite they feed; but
she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies . . ."

And one thinks Camilla thoughts. But then it is the fate of monarchs to have their every move and act interpreted, in case they turn dangerous.

Last night the writing of this piece occupied my dreams: I spent a restless night. I dreamt I was going to a party to celebrate the millennium. I went to the wrong address, as did many of my fellow citizens. It was left to me to tow them all upstream in a lifeboat to the proper place. I waded against the current through mud, pulling my passengers, but it was a lovely day and they were in party mood. We arrived at the right destination, a palace on the waterfront, Amsterdam style. We were greeted by our host, a courteous man in a formal suit. I recognised him as the Prince of Wales. I looked back and saw that the river was no river but a garden path. The boat was not a lifeboat but a flat wooden box. I had been dragging my fellow citizens up the garden path on an antique *cello case. Make of* that what you will.

The Prince's Choice is published on cassette (£12.99) and CD (£19.99) by Hodder Headline Audio Books, and as a book (£12.99) by Hodder Headline

Drop of culture with your drink, sir?

IT WAS one of those parties where I knew everybody and nobody. I mean of course I knew Paul Daniels and Debbie McGee but I didn't *know* them. I mean what would you say to Paul and Debbie if you were standing behind them in the queue waiting to whisper your name to the master of ceremonies? What, for example, would *you* say to Ronnie Corbett, even if he did appear to be nodding encouragingly in your direction? Or Kiri Te Kanawa? Hey Kiri, great ad for Rolex! Or the wide-eyed Susan George as you brushed towels in the loo? It was the meisterchef Lloyd Grossman, newly of bottled Jalapeno sauce fame, who dared *to pose the question.* "What are we all doing here?"

What indeed? The invitation was straightforward enough. As patron of the Festival of Arts and Culture, the Prince of Wales requested our presence at the state apartments of St James's Palace to celebrate the arts. Perhaps, I hoped, we might be treated to an exclusive reading of his Prince Hal? No, it appeared that this was simply a chance for the Prince to exercise one of the nicer perks of his job and party on down with the luvvies. There he was chatting earnestly to the Rices, Anneka and Tim. There he was again laughing richly with a gorgeously giggly Felicity Kendal. And all the time, under the eyes of the Reynolds portraits, young ladies glided across the deep red carpets, trays burdened with smoked salmon parcels, asparagus pancakes and mini Yorkshire puds filled with roastbeef and horseradish. "Mmmm, exceedingly good canapes," mumbled a still bewildered Grossman, his mouth full of sausage with apple sauce. "Wunner who did the cadering?"

More to the point, who did the invitation list? What, for example, has Michael Portillo's Government done to help the arts? Not a great deal considering Waldegrave's suggestion that state funding be replaced by Lottery money. Still there Portillo was, loitering hesitantly as Rory Bremner loudly proclaimed that even America spent proportionately more on social welfare than this damned Government.

Entertaining though he was, talking to Bremner turned out to be a distinct disadvantage. The more I tried to anticipate the Prince's movements — discreetly of course, so I could manoeuvre myself "incidentally" into his pathway — the more Bremner seemed to back off. Indeed *as soon as the Prince made* the most vaguest of movements in our direction, Bremner bolted to a darkened corner appearing appalled by the thought of actual contact with his subject. I was left with a middle-aged matron who confided that she showed Daschunds in her spare time and knew Susan George through the dog circuit.

"Would you like to meet her?" the matron demanded. And so we purposely strode over to the far side of the room and hung nonchalantly around while Susan resolutely refused to engage the matron's eye.

Time was pressing. Tom Conti . . . Nigel Hawthorne . . . Lord St John of Fawsley . . . Lord Menuhin . . . Melvyn Bragg . . . Heavens, the Prince had even stopped to talk to the man representing Manchester Airport! It was then I learned the awful truth, that the Prince's assistants had long *ago compiled a list of names* he should speak to and the Guardian did not appear on it.

I swallowed a final canape and left the Prince in the firm grip of Patti Boulaye — winner of New Faces 1978.

Out of their league

Television

Stuart Jeffries

IT'S a paradox of modern viewing that the worse British football gets, the more of it there is on television. The question that arises, like a hopeless goalkeeper after the ball has hit the net, is why? Is there some national impulse towards wallowing in footballing ineptitude? Or do people actually like watching 0-0 draws between Blackburn and Legia Warsaw?

It's not just the exhaustive coverage of the European fixtures that has dominated this week's prime-time *schedules*, though that has been dismal enough. It has been lacerating stuff, a theatre which only knows two modes: exasperating midfield scrambles or twinkled-toed continentals stuffing the leather into our plodding boys' onion bags.

And after the drama has ended, no consolation, just Alan Hansen's eye sockets darkening, conveying better than his words the mood of national disgrace, if not dishonour. (Are football fans, stifling sobs in their living rooms, not entitled to feel betrayed if, of all our teams in European competition, only lowly Raith managed to score this week, and then against mighty Bayern? No, really, this is important.)

When football has not been live this week, ghosts of triumphs past have been invoked in programmes which commissioning editors may have originally scheduled in order to capitalise on the game's trendiness, but which have actually provided a timely reminder of the now distant times when British soccer wasn't overrun by the ball-shy.

Football Fussball Voetbal (BBC2), for instance, John Motson's nostalgic series on the history of European football, dealt with British clubs this week. In fact, it was only the first instalment of a two-part history of triumphs. Next week he will attend to the golden era of the late seventies and early eighties, when even Peter Withe, that flawed idol in claret and blue, would find the score sheet in a European Cup final. Imagine! British football must have been great once; after all, Motson only gave one week to the stylish clubs of Spain and Portugal.

Those were the days. Spurs' 1962 match with Poland's Grolnik was as high scoring as a game of Polish Scrabble — 10-5 on aggregate. Bobby Moore lifting the European Cup Winners' Cup at Wembley as captain of West Ham in 1965, with the prescient commentator musing that he might be lifting the World Cup there the following year. Celtic winning the European Cup in 1968 as Irish tricolours waved around the Lisbon stadium.

Ah, memories. Well, not even memories for most of us: just grainy footage of events that it is hard to believe actually happened. How could they? How could British clubs play so well? Were the best Italian footballers forced to work in espresso bars during the sixties or something?

What was particularly intriguing about the documentary was how football commentary has evolved. Viewers of match highlights had to get used to commentators telling them what was going to happen — thus destroying any suspense. In the report on Manchester United's 4-1 European Cup Final victory over Benfica, for example, the commentator announced: "Here's the sequence that writes their golden chapter in the records — three goals in eight minutes. Number one: Best takes his time before driving it home." Then we saw him do exactly that.

That sort of narration is inconceivable now: presenters and commentators have entered into a welcome conspiracy *not to tell viewers* what is going to happen: rather, we can watch the suspenseful events unfold with the commentary telling what is happening or has happened.

But there's no reason to be complacent: the era of Motson, Davies and Moore may have been an improvement, but the predominant style of commentary is now as outmoded as the predominant style of British football. Perhaps instead of Frank Skinner providing jokes about the game for Fantasy Football, he should swap jobs with Motson for a while.

After all, as many of the football magazines and fanzines attest, soccer culture is not just about serious-minded, obsessive attention to detail, but about ironising that very laddish, trainspotterish obsession. What's more, the British game is so bad at the moment we could do with someone to make us laugh while we watch it.

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ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

Reviews

POP

Celine Dion
Wembley Arena

IT WOULD be nice to believe French-Canadian chanteuse Celine Dion voted for separation in the Quebec referendum. It would have been the first rebellious act in a career that makes even Sir Cliff look debauched.

One of 14 offspring of a rural Quebecois family, Celine sang for the Pope aged seven, went professional in her teens and was Canada's biggest pop star by 21. Her big break outside her homeland came when she duetted on the theme tune to the Disney cartoon Beauty And The Beast. But any hopes that that cloying dirge would prove a fluke were dashed when the equally noisome follow-up, Think Twice, *shifted one million copies* in Britain alone. Appallingly, Dion has sold more records here this year than any other artist.

This was her second Wembley show in less than six months, testament to the popularity of her blockbuster ballads. Dion's following are so ardent they were in their seats long before she came springing out, rubber shirt and trousers flapping gently as she moved. Several times in the following hour, fans were so overcome by some especially overwrought piece of singing that they drummed their feet for minutes at a time. Dion responded with regal dignity, *her sensible hairdo* quivering a bit.

Stylistically, she's closest to Whitney Houston, but without Houston's occasional lapses into soulfulness. She's been gifted with a truly sensational voice and range but, like Houston, squanders them on unworthy adult-orientated pop. And if she gives her all on disc, she gives more than her all live. Emoting her way through Calling You — such a weepie she had to sing it sitting down — she tensed her muscles and closed her eyes, apparently overcome. But with what — sadness, lurve, or the discomfort of being encased in rubber pantaloons?

The handful of uptempo numbers provided a respite. They also proved that it's rarely a good idea to claim — as she did before the percolating Misled — to be "a dancer who also sings", unless one really is.

Still, at least she had that Gallic charm, *non*? By all means, but banalities like "I wish you could all come on tour with me" are still banal, cute accent or not. And — *merde!* — she didn't reveal how she'd voted, either. A dreary evening. Quebec, *nul point.*

Caroline Sullivan

OPERA

La Belle Helene
Glasgow/ touring

OFFENBACH's transformation of Helen's abduction by Paris into a libidinous saga of loose morals and cuckoldry is given an extra level of bawdy humour and buffoonery in Scottish Opera's new production. "Come climb aboard my rampant prow" goes Jeremy Wells's spicy translation.

For all its melodic bounce, Offenbach's music for La Belle Helene is neither profound nor (with the exception of the Act 2 waltz) memorable. The characters of the Greek kings and nobles are thinly painted as blithering idiots — only Paris and Helen have any substance. But deft direction and elegant design have transformed what could so easily become a farce of Carry On proportions into a beguiling piece of theatre.

The Act 1 set is a ravishing concoction of huge red velvet drapes and ionic columns against a neoclassical cityscape, which changes into an ornate Second Empire boudoir for Act 2 and then, to a round of applause from the audience, into a pastel and *cream seaside resort for Act 3.* In these opulent surroundings, soloists and chorus have been choreographed with an almost obsessive attention to detail. A procession of mourners has the audience shrieking with laughter as an invented obeisance at the altar of Jupiter turns out to be a sign of the cross made with waggling fingers. The chorus seldom walk across the stage when they can skip.

There is a brilliant sense of energy, particularly important in an opera where half the business is conducted in speech. The cast sing efficiently, and those that can act do so splendidly. Jonathan Viera, who upstaged everybody as Bartolo in Scottish Opera's Figaro, is in his element as the lewd high priest Calchas. As the gorgeous shepherd Paris, Tracey Welborn bares his chest enthusiastically. And Anne Howells is resplendent in the title role, carrying her lines with unerring comic timing.

☐ At the Theatre Royal Glasgow tonight, then in Newcastle and Edinburgh (0141-248 4567).

Christopher Lambton

POP

Whale
The Underworld, London

BACK home in Sweden, Whale's Henrik Schyffert is a successful TV *comedian. Their singer,* Cia Berg, is also a familiar face on the box, working as a presenter. The English equivalent of Whale would be a group fronted by Sean Hughes and Paula Yates — your basic late-20th century nightmare, in other words, though brightened by the fact that their rollicking debut LP, the facetiously-titled We Care, is big and brash and lots of fun.

Cia, with her dark hair and sharp features, looks nothing like the Swedish stereotype. She does, however, sing about sex a lot. Naturally, one or two of the boys in the music press have been getting rather excited about this, and in the case of Whale's first single, Hobo Humpin' Slobo Babe, they are not unjustified.

Built around a deliriously funky bass riff and monstrous chanted chorus, Hobo alone had led one to expect a live *show that was fast and glam*orous. Until it arrived towards the end of the set, however, the six-piece had inexplicably plumped for the ponderous and hugely unglamorous option of ragged Scandinavian grunge instead. Which, in case you're wondering, is not very different from anyone else's ragged grunge.

The last tune, Kickin', which opens We Care, offered some indication of what Whale might be capable of on a good day, being slow and spare if a touch cute. But this wasn't a good day and, for all *their shouting* about sex, a less sexy band would have been hard to find.

Andrew Smith

Liberalism has become the world's dominant political theory but its philosophical foundations remain uncertain and its capacity to deal with brutal realities unsatisfactory. Isaiah Berlin is the champion of modern liberalism but, argues ERNEST GELLNER, the old Fox is a relativist by any other name. Illustration by GEOFF GRANDFIELD

A case of the Liberal's new clothes

THE FOX knows many things, the hedgehog knows one big thing. Isaiah Berlin has preached the virtues of the fox so long, so persistently and so coherently, that he has become the veritable hedgehog of foxiness. He seems possessed by a single dominating idea — that we should not have single dominating ideas. In his view, the system of human values has no all-embracing, unifying apex, which could constitute a kind of final court of appeal for deciding all issues.

Still, Berlin is a relaxed writer, and if a deep tension is inherent in his central theme, a reader might be forgiven for not noticing it. But this is not in the least true of John Gray's exposition of his views in Isaiah Berlin (Harper Collins, 1995, and now in paperback in the Fontana Modern Masters series). Gray passionately pursues what is virtually a single theme: can the acceptance of a plurality of rival — or incommensurate — values be consistent with liberalism?

Gray enters into Berlin's system of ideas, identifies with it, and lives out its tensions. He is so involved in the problems which haunt Berlin's thought, that he pursues them with a determination which is less conspicuous in Berlin's own leisurely, one might say blasé, style.

The Berlin who emerges from Gray's intellectual portrait is rather more coherent and hedgehoggy, and much more perturbed by the problems of his own position, and far more persistent in seeking an answer to them, than the original. Gray's point is that "all of Berlin's work is animated by a single idea of enormous subversive force". The idea is, of course, that insight of the fox. Gray acclaims Berlin as the source of a new and superior kind of liberalism, trumping conventional liberalisms because it acknowledges a plurality of conflicting values.

It is important to place Berlin in the context of the thought of his time. Gray tries to dissociate him from the linguistic philosophers of post-war Oxford, such as J L Austin, but here Gray is mistaken. Gray himself quotes a lengthy passage from Berlin which is pure linguistic philosophy. Berlin denounces and indeed "exposes" what he calls "a false theory of meaning," which would have an ultimately homogeneous universe reflected in an ultimately homogeneous language.

Wittgenstein had taught that language could only be understood by a fox and that the mistake of all past philosophers was that they were all linguistic hedgehogs. Though this mistake was one about language, like some computer virus it spread everywhere and infected everything. The unmasking of this alleged error was enthusiastically acclaimed by Oxford post-war philosophy as the key to the dissolution of philosophical and political problems.

But if indeed this was philosophy, could there be any room for political thought? Could the English, American, French and Russian revolutions all have been avoided, if only Wittgenstein had lived and written a bit sooner. Could he not have explained to all those people that there was nothing to get hot under the collar about, once you understood that language had many incommensurate forms? Should rioting mobs be read, not the Riot Act, but suitable passages from the work of Wittgenstein?

Isaiah Berlin found a way, of sorts, out of this little difficulty. Political philosophy would now be the study of the history of ideas, and the ideas under investigation would not be doomed *a priori* to a merely local validity; it would just so happen that in practice political philosophy would never interfere with anything much. It might ask you to cool it, so to speak.

If the central fact of the human condition is the plurality of incommensurate values, as Berlin argues, then theorists of the past can be excoriated for the failure to see this, a mistake built right into their basic strategy: the pursuit of an all-embracing political truth (Plato, Kant, indeed the great tradition of western thought). Perhaps they can also be blamed for totalitarianism into the bargain, which was a consequence of such moral monism. Alternatively, they too affirmed this central idea of pluralism, and so, though intellectually sound, they were *ipso facto* deprived of the possibility of excessive interference in the real world.

Berlin actually did identify predecessors of this perception (though some, it seems, were ambivalent in articulating it): Machiavelli, Vico, Herder, Tolstoy, all of whom come out looking suspiciously alike. A minor problem for Gray the expositor is how this central idea can both be original and yet also possess that powerful quartet (at least) of predecessors. More serious is the question: is the claim that values are incommensurate really so original? Were the heroes of Greek drama, for instance, strangers to the idea of an irresoluble conflict of values? Did Antigone not experience the clash of obligation to kin and to the state?

In more recent times, Gray fails to mention others who had made the same point, for instance William James or Raymond Aron. He does mention Max Weber, in a truly preposterous manner: it's admitted that Weber knew about "irreconcilable values," but Weber is then reprimanded for failing to give "any account of the sources of such clashes . . . in conflict between different cultural forms." This must be one of the most bizarre charges ever made, and it can only mean that Gray has never read Weber.

Weber didn't merely talk about warring gods, he explored them with unequalled depth. One of the crucial criticisms which can be made of Berlin's formulation of the rival-gods problem is precisely its sociological thinness, its abstract-philosophical formulation.

Whose views exactly are being challenged by this claim about inherently contested values? Who exactly was guilty of the contrary assumption of an ultimate rational harmony? Hegel, no doubt: his view of history was that, in the end, all cakes are to be both retained and consumed. The great diversity of cultures and political systems, all contribute to and are parts of a master plan, and a little of each of them (the best bit) survives in the final grand synthesis, a kind of *zuppa inglese* of values.

Marx seems to have taken over this illusion: all values, all life styles would, it seems, coexist under communism, without giving any rise to problems of coordination. Communist social organisation would be a kind of bohemian mega-commune, with optional and changeable roles available to all participants. Agriculturalists, pastoralists, fishermen and critics would all go their own way, but none of them would wish to plough where the other wished to graze, or compete for space in the available critical journals.

HEGELIANS and their Marxist progeny are not the only candidates for being charged with pernicious, hedgehog, value-harmonising views. The utilitarians, proposing a single measure of value (happiness, pleasure), were committed to the view that there was an optimal point in any problem situation, a solution which identified the point of the least evil.

It seems to me that the many thinkers who accepted the claims of reason, in the sense of supposing it capable of supplying a unique and cogent answer, did so not because they failed to notice that values conflicted and were mutually incompatible, but, more simply, because they thought that nevertheless, some values were valid and others invalid. Recognition of conflict as such is nothing new: the novelty lies only in the vigorous affirmation of the finality of this situation. But the affirmation of "incommensurate values" is relativism, presented in different and more innocuous words. The existence of conflict between values is simply a fact; but incommensurability is a theory, and the theory is relativism. The word encapsulates a theory about the universe, namely that, contrary to the views of Christians, Platonists, Kantians, Utilitarians, Marxists and others, there is no supreme value or principle which could legitimately adjudicate between rival values. The originality of the position, if it obtains at all, can only lie in the affirmation of relativism, of an irreducible and terminal diversity.

It is a relativism which dares not speak its name. There is much to support it. For instance, there is no way of assessing externally the benefits and losses of modernity, of the transition from honour to interest, from the values of Burke or Carlyle to those of John Stuart Mill or Bertrand Russell. For instance, did the Russian peasant gain or lose by becoming a literate urban-dweller? Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn give markedly opposed answers to this question, and neither of them can easily be ignored.

Not only does Gray characterise Berlin as a relativist, while avoiding the word and denying the imputation, he struggles passionately with the problem which the renamed or camouflaged relativism engenders. The truth of the plurality of incommensurate values might perhaps help liberty, by showing that no values must be imposed on anyone. Alas, this won't work, for this position must also allow illiberal values their place in the sun. This is the basic trouble with the initially tempting idea of enlisting incommensurateness on the side of tolerance: the values and visions endorsed by the procedure also include total and intolerant ones, which are neither inconspicuous nor unimportant in history. In the end, in a passage in which, characteristically, eloquence tries to plug the hole left by lack of arguments, Gray settles for a liberalism devoid of foundations.

Relativism deprives us of the means — indeed of the right — to express deep revulsion. Given those incommensurates, how do you cope with societies which contain slavery, gulags, female circumcision, or gas chambers, and whose apologists might well invoke that deep pluralism? The right to female circumcision is on occasion demanded by its victims, for the practice does fulfil their values.

Ultimately, Gray's manner of dealing with the problem of truly repugnant societies is shallow. We may have plural and conflicting values, but, says he, there is an inner core of values shared by us all, or very nearly so. So we can exempt slavery, gulags and gas chambers because nearly all mankind does so, or because, though values may be incommensurate, nevertheless these practices violate these possibly conflicting values.

All this is worthless: it has never been established, nor is it plausible, that some global plebiscite really would condemn these practices by a convincing majority. In fact, the number of societies permitting slavery or similar abominations is quite high, so that the claim to exclude them by a pan-human consensus is absurd. Nor could one accept the idea that the views of minorities in this global value-referendum should be damned. Still less is it the case that these practices violate all values, and for that reason cannot benefit from the argument from the legitimacy of incommensurate values. Is Aristotle to be excluded from that Oecumenical Constituent Assembly (convened, presumably, by Unesco) which will draw up the Charter of Universal Consensual Values? Those who practise these things also invoke certain values, whether or not we share them. Racial purity, stability, an inherent ranking of human types, the maintenance of a warrior ethic, progress or excellence through competition, the protection of the Revolution from its enemies, the implementation of the eternal Word of God and so on. They are not my values, but they are values, and once you have deprived yourself of the means of damning values, in the name of their incommensurateness, you have to face the logical consequences. Plebiscites certainly won't help you.

Like other relativists, Berlin grants himself a non-relativistic meta-theory: the relativism is the public face presented on stage, but behind the scenes, values are in fact ranked according to merit. Apparently, incommensurateness prevails, but backstage Berlin allows himself a positive and general political theory. Just because values are plural and incommensurate, Berlin recommends politics of compromise and balance. This is a most commendable piece of advice — and I for one am happy to follow and advocate it. But is it exempt from that pluralism of incommensurate (hence equal) values which is at the base of everything? If it is not exempt, then who is to stop religious fundamentalists from finding compromise on religious principle unacceptable? If it is exempt, then what happens to the theory itself? This criticism has already been made by Perry Anderson, as Gray rightly points out, but it is fundamental and deserves to be repeated.

Gray has placed Berlin in the context of the history of abstract thought. The fate of liberty, it sometimes seems, depends on the quality of arguments deployed in the philosophical journals. So far, on the whole, I have followed Gray's conventions in this matter. But as Gray makes large claims for Berlin as a prophet of a new liberalism, it is also appropriate to see Berlin against the backcloth of the real world.

IN THIS century, the fate of liberty has been rather strange. It seemed to be doing well at the beginning of the century. Then, a terrible trough: the catastrophe of the first world war, the reaction of left and right anti-liberalism; a very close-run war with right illiberalism, followed by a conquest of half Europe by left illiberalism. And then, suddenly and providentially, the world seems constructed in a manner which favours freedom. Some have concluded from this that history is at an end (Berlin's Oxford colleagues thought it had never happened).

I do not share this complacent optimism. Liberty has ridden to victory on the back of consumerism. Thank God for that. So long as the shopkeepers, allied henceforth to speculators and promoters, and perhaps fixers and mafiosi, keep winning, and so long as the logic of their internal situation keeps them in turn politically tolerant, well and good. But it would be folly to be confident that all this must necessarily continue. There are dangers ahead for our affluence-sustained liberty. I can think of at least eight of these.

First, government by growth cannot go on forever, although it will go on for a time. It has enabled countries capable of attaining growth to be liberal and at the same time maintain order, without the traditional, and perhaps unavoidably brutal methods. But saturation point must be reached eventually, when the washing machine will no longer deputise for the executioner as the foundation of social order. Second, although mildly powerful technology aids liberty, a very powerful one may turn out to be its enemy. Third, late industrialism generally may no longer be conducive to that individualism which was indeed linked to early industrialism. Fourth, the extension of technology to the human field, if it does come about, may re-introduce extreme forms of inequality, for instance, by making it possible to purchase health and longevity at a high price. This in turn may undermine the affluence-induced attenuation of social conflict. Fifth, advanced industrialism both stimulates nationalism and yet also thwarts it by engendering massive labour migrations, thereby causing tensions which may not be contained by liberal methods. Sixth, a free market in incommensurate values, none of them socially or doctrinally underwritten, may produce an intolerable moral vacuum. Seventh, societies reaching late industrialism not from a pre-industrial traditional society, but from the ruins of a centralised "socialist" system, may in some cases be incapable of reaching even that logically incoherent but socially viable compromise which marks consumerist liberalism. Such societies may decline into criminalisation or neo-authoritarianism or worse, and be socially infectious. Finally, modern technology, through the ecological and terrorist dangers it brings along, may necessitate the termination of political plurality.

It behoves us to think of these dangers. Does Berlin help us? One should expect some help from an important, innovative prophet of liberalism.

But, what is missing in Berlin's work is a concrete sense of the social context of liberal practices, such as is found, for instance, in the work of Max Weber. It is sensible to try to look at what happens to liberty in the real world.

Can liberty really be at the mercy of extremely abstruse and difficult arguments such as those found in Gray's book, which a professional don such as myself follows only with considerable difficulty (and sometimes not at all)? If, at one end, this philosophy is insufficiently preoccupied with transcendence and objectivity, then, at the other end, it is far too ethereal. It gives the impression that the history of ideas is everything, or very nearly, and that non-intellectual constraints need not concern us.

But Gray does make a perceptive remark when he observes that some of Berlin's views can be put in the jargon of post-modernism. There does, indeed, seem to be an overlap between "agonistic liberalism" and the wilder shores of current relativistic and subjectivistic fashion. The styles may be miles apart: antinomian post-modernists may preach that worlds are "socially constructed", so as to give them something to "de-construct". Berlin's relativism, presented as the recognition of incommensurateness, is presented as the lucid recognition of the human condition.

However, in Gray's exposition, this insight is haunted by the perception that what is sauce for the liberal goose is sauce for the illiberal gander. There are too many unwelcome beneficiaries at the feast, and attempts to exclude them only end in a logical mess. So, while the roots of post-modernism and agonistic liberalism may differ, Gray is right to point to the connection. Perhaps we might call Berlin the Savile Row post-modernist.

A fuller version of this article appears in the November issue of Prospect (£3.50)

John Gray has taught political theory at Oxford for almost 20 years. Apart from his book on Isaiah Berlin, he has also published this year Enlightenment's Wake: Politics And Culture At The Close Of The Modern Age (Routledge)

Sir Isaiah Berlin, a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, is regarded by many as the greatest living historian of ideas. His The Hedgehog And The Fox was first published in 1953. Recent books include The Crooked Timber Of Humanity

Ernest Gellner was professor of philosophy at LSE for 20 years before moving to Cambridge where he was professor of social anthropology. Recent books include Postmodernism, Reason And Religion, and Conditions Of Liberty

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C CENTURY

With friends at Long Crichel . . . from left, standing, Reynolds Stone, Pat Trevor-Roper, Shawe-Taylor, Jack Rathbone; sitting, Dadie Rylands, Raymond Mortimer PHOTO: JANET STONE

Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Critic who got there first

DESMOND Shawe-Taylor, who has died aged 88, was the doyen of British music critics and a pioneer in the study of the history of the gramophone and recording. He was chief music critic of the Sunday Times from 1958 to 1983 and before that music critic of the New Statesman from 1945 to 1953, as well as being record critic of the Observer, radio critic of the Sunday Times, and a member of the editorial board of Opera magazine, from its inception in 1950.

His family, from Co Galway, were typically Anglo-Irish in their sporting interests, although related to Lady Gregory (co-founder of the Abbey Theatre) and the art collector Sir Hugh Lane. Shawe-Taylor was educated at Shrewsbury School, then at Oriel College, Oxford, where he began his lifelong passion for music, and in particular for singing. He had taken a *First in English at Oxford*, and most of his early journalism was literary, but in the late 1930s he began to contribute music criticism to several journals. He was one of the first British critics to champion the work of Alban Berg — he attended the first production of Lulu in Zurich in 1937, and persuaded the Times to allow him to review it at length. "There is much in the opera which shows . . . Berg's extraordinary power of depicting extreme nervous tension and a certain acid-humour," he wrote. This was very advanced opinion at the time.

He also had a great affection for the popular song of the 1900s, and particularly admired Yvette Guilbert, Toulouse-Lautrec's famous model. He told me that when she first re-appeared in London after the first world war, he contrived to go to nearly all her recitals at the Arts Theatre, playing truant from school.

One of his first assignments for the New Statesman was to review Guilbert's final London concert at the Wigmore Hall in 1939, and he gave a wonderfully succinct and illuminating lecture about her at the National Sound Archive in 1980.

After war service with the Royal Artillery he returned to London in 1945 as a full-time music critic. He was again far in advance of other writers in agitating for a hearing of Janacek's operas. In 1956 Shawe-Taylor attended the first post-war performance of The Makropulos Case in Prague, when he wrote of the "strange eloquence" of the final scene. Of The Cunning Little Vixen, he wrote "of an almost pantheistic absorption in the eternal self-renewal of nature". These were among the earliest reviews in English of these two Janacek operas, several years before they were performed here.

His curiosity about his favourite subjects was immense, and the search for detail and the satisfaction and pleasure he gained, whether it was from the words of a song, found to accompany an old recording, a name, or a date, made scholarship into a game of hunt the thimble. From 1951 to 1973 he contributed a quarterly article to the Gramophone about vocal recordings, and he also sought out and interviewed most singers of the past whose recordings he admired.

A particular friend was the great American soprano Emma Eames. At her apartment in the rue de l'Université in Paris in the 1930s, he recalled that, "Once or twice I persuaded her to sing some Schubert Lieder to my inadequate accompaniment". He had an acute ear for melody and, above all for the clear enunciation of the text. In 1951 he collaborated with Edward Sackville-West on the Record Guide, which became one of the most influential books on the repertory of the gramophone.

With Sackville-West and the painter Eardley Knollys, Shawe-Taylor bought a handsome Queen Anne house at Long Crichel in Dorset. There they succeeded in what many others have planned but few achieved — a leisurely, shared environment in which their different friends, interests and personalities met to create an intellectually stimulating but relaxed atmosphere. Shawe-Taylor's collection of gramophone records and opera scores, his Steinway grand, and Sackville-West's and Knollys's paintings were later joined by Raymond Mortimer's library. At Crichel, an atmosphere of Edwardian country-house living was crossed with a delightful bohemian lack of convention. After Sackville-West died and Knollys left, the quartet was renewed, first by the distinguished opthalmic surgeon, Patrick Trevor-Roper, and later the painter and writer Derek Hill.

> He admired Yvette Guilbert, Toulouse-Lautrec's famous model, and attended nearly all her recitals, playing truant from school

Shawe-Taylor's manner combined extreme courtesy, he would hesitate and consider his reply to any question, with a delightful and sometimes abrupt sense of humour. His laugh was characteristically accompanied by a gesture of helplessness, raising both hands. His bubbling enthusiasm could also surface in what I can only describe as quick bursts of rage. "I just can't stand it a moment longer!" he cried out once in the middle of a lecture at the British Institute of Recorded Sound, "They're playing them all at the wrong speed!"

He retained a keen interest in contemporary music and was always eager to hear new works. Inevitably, he was out of sympathy with a great deal of modern opera productions, and in 1977 wrote an essay on Producer's Folly, or How to Wreck a Masterpiece. ("However great the producer's talents, however essential to the smooth functioning of the theatrical machine, his place in the house of art should remain, in the terms of the TV serial, Downstairs and not Upstairs.")

Until two years ago, Shawe-Taylor continued to divide his time between London and Dorset, but finally he decided, "After vaguely thinking of various London solutions, I realised that, at 85, I don't need a regular London abode any more, and prefer to live nice solitary week-middles down here, getting on with what I still do, and enjoying plenty of company at weekends."

He died suddenly, having just come back from a walk, in the house in which he had lived for more than 50 years, sharing its atmosphere, full of love, with so many lucky friends.

Patrick O'Connor

Frances Partridge writes: I look back on my first visit to Long Crichel House and the four dear friends who lived there with gratitude and deep affection; nor can I think of any other house where I have spent so many happy times, both with my husband Ralph and during my later lonely life, right up to the present day.

I realise that I was a little intimidated by the brilliance of my hosts on that first occasion. But the more I got to know them the more I loved and felt at ease with them. I used to think of them as a string quartet: Eddy Sackville-West, as the first violin, clear confident and sometimes wailing a little; Raymond Mortimer, the cello with his deep resonant voice; Eardley Knollys, the trusty and practical second violin; but Desmond Shawe-Taylor, the all important viola, with his high spirits and volatility, his grasp of the whole — and each playing his individual part in delighted awareness of the other three, as of course, every good quartet should.

But now, with the melancholy final chord, the music has ended. Desmond was one of the happiest of men and brought joy to all his friends as much by his scholarship as by his glorious sense of the comic.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor, critic, born May 29, 1907, died November 1, 1995

Metropolitan Ioann

Russia's iron priest

IF THERE is truth in the saying that the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church is the most "Soviet" of the institutions in Moscow, then one must also state that Metropolitan Ioann of St Petersburg, who has died aged 68, was the most retrogressive of his peers. He is even believed to have called for a return of iron rule at the time of the *putsch* in August 1991, with Mikhail Gorbachev under house arrest in his villa on the Black Sea and the fate of his country hanging in the balance. It was on a knife edge whether Patriarch Alexi, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, would call on the faithful to support the coup or not. For a few hours his advisers were sharply divided, but in the end he overrode Ioann and others and called for Gorbachev to come back to Moscow and speak to the world.

Metropolitan Ioann had occupied the second see of the Russian Orthodox Church for a bare year at this point, but over the next four years he was to become a major block to reform and an embarrassment to the faithful, in his own diocese and beyond, who wanted to see the Church play a leading and enlightened role in the new society.

Ivan Snychev was born in the Ukraine and grew up in the hard times of the second world war. He became a deacon at 18, going to Leningrad to receive theological education. From then on his destiny was bound up entirely with Russian, not Ukrainian, church life. He became a monk in 1956, taking the name of Ioann, the monastic equivalent of his baptismal name. He rose through the hierarchy at a time when most leading churchmen had been purged in the Stalin era. By the age of 38, he had become assistant bishop in Kuibyshev and took over the see three years later. He became an archbishop and stayed for the unusually long time of 25 years.

A common tactic of the time was for the state officials to force bishops to move around rapidly so that they did not acquire too loyal a local following. Archbishop Ioann's long stay in Kuibyshev was indicative of the trust put in him by Soviet bureaucracy: he was considered a safe man who would not actively oppose atheist policies.

HIS translation to Leningrad in July 1990, to fill the vacancy left by the elevation of Metropolitan Alexi to the Patriarchate, was a surprise: an arch-conservative called to a position of major national — and indeed international — importance at the height of *perestroika*, the very time when new initiatives were called for and could quickly be put into practice.

He could have used Leningrad's strategic position to involve foreign partners in many new programmes. But he did nothing of the sort. Instead, he seemed to think this was a time to turn his back on anyone in his diocese who had new ideas and even less to discuss them with any of the stream of foreign visitors who passed through his city.

As chairman of the liturgical commission of the Holy Synod, the (non-elected) executive arm of the Moscow Patriarchate, he set his face against even a discussion of change, especially the possibility of introducing Russian to replace or stand alongside Church Slavonic, the archaic official language of the liturgy.

His anti-ecumenism, despite his Church's membership of the World Council of Churches, was implacable and he was in the forefront of those who condemned the post-Soviet influx of foreign missionaries. This latter view was not so eccentric and was widely shared, but Ioann discredited himself in the eyes of many by his embracing of anti-semitism. Indeed, he used a regular column in the arch-conservative newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* as the sounding board for the most outrageous propaganda to be found anywhere in Russia.

Ioann . . . anti-Semitic

In 1994 he published his book, Autocracy Of The Spirit, the thesis of which is that Russia has been, over the whole course of history, the object of a Jewish conspiracy. If published in this country, the book might well have been actionable as an incitement to racial violence.

Popular revulsion led to a request by Patriarch Alexi to moderate his views or to discontinue publishing them, but Ioann did not heed the warning and the official Church itself has suffered from its failure to suppress this voice so near the top of the hierarchy. His death will bring an era of change to church life in Russia's second city and immense interest will focus on the appointment of a successor.

Michael Bourdeaux

Ivan Snychev (Metropolitan Ioann), Russian Orthodox priest, born October 9, 1927; died November 2, 1995

Death Notices

FERRIER. Winifred Margaret, of Mary Feilding Guild, Highgate and Eastside House, Temple Fortune and formerly of Ulstercourt, Kingston Upon-Thames, on November 1st in her 92nd year in loving care at Whittington Hospital Sister of the late Kathleen Ferrier contralto to the memory of whose artistry, particularly in its example to young singers, she devoted so much of their indomitnitable spirit, energy, grace and humility. Funeral service on Friday 10th November at Golders Green Crematorium at 3pm. No flowers, please, but donations if desired to the Kathleen Ferrier Chair of Clinical Oncology and made payable to "University College, London c/o Prof Souhami The Middlesex Hospital Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AA.

FODEN. Val, (formerly Val Walker, nee Willis) died peacefully at home in London on October 31st 1995 aged 80. Comrade and lifelong campaigner for justice, peace and the environment she will be sadly missed. Val asked not to have a funeral. A notice of a celebration of Val's life will be placed in this paper later in the year

HENRY, Mary Gwendolen Nicol, C.B.E. On October 31st at St. Pancras Hospital, dear sister to Richard, Leslie, Harry and Hector Born April 10th, 1912, formerly Registrar of The General Nursing Council of England and Wales. Funeral Service at Golders Green Crematorium, Hoop Lane, NW11, at noon. No flowers by request. Donations may be sent to The 1930 Fund for District Nurses, 1a Winders Road, London, SW11 3HE.

JAGGER. Sylvia, of Groton, Oldham. The beloved partner of Eric, died on the 30th October 1995 and was cremated on 3rd November 1995

JENKINS. John, on November 2nd 1995 peacefully at home. John, Minister of Saltaire United Reformed Church, Saltaire, West Yorkshire Husband of Valerie and father of Simon and Rachel. Any enquiries to H H. Birch, Funeral Directors Tel. 01274 583467. Romans 8,38,39.

KNOWLES. On November 2nd 1995, peacefully after a long illness, Sidney Francis (Frank) aged 80 of Denton Newhaven, formerly of East Grinstead and Lewes. Dearly loved husband of Pat and a much loved father and grandfather Service at Seaford Baptist Church on Wednesday November 8th at 11.30 am. Enquiries care of Legg-peacher, Seaford and Newhaven Funeral Service, tel. 01323-893889.

In Memoriam

FARRAR. Dear Susie all our love on your birthday, 5th November, as ever. Mum, Rose and family and Robert.

TEMPLE, Joanna. Died November 5, 1993. Remembered by Frank, Debbie, Debbie, Lillian and all the children.

WILFRED OWEN, poet. Oswestry, 18th March 1893 - killed in action - France, 4th of November 1918. Wilfred Owen Association, 17 Belmont, Shrewsbury SY1 1TE.

■To place your announcement telephone 0171 611 9080

Weekend Birthdays

WHATEVER Joseph Rotblat, right, gets to mark his 87th birthday today, it is unlikely to match the £635,000 Nobel Peace Prize he picked up four weeks ago. He (and Pugwash, the scientific peace forum he founded with Bertrand Russell and others in 1957) will not be deflected by mere birthdays. This morning Prof Rotblat speaks about nuclear weapons and how to disinvent them at a London conference organised by Medact, the British group involved in International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Born in Poland, the young Joseph Rotblat lost his wife and his home to the Nazis. But in Warsaw, in 1939, he had already worked out that an atomic bomb would be possible. He did research in Liverpool before going to Los Alamos to lead the British team involved in the Manhattan Project. "I was very afraid that if Germany developed the bomb, Hitler would have no hesitation in using it," he said. Then he learned that the Nazis had abandoned their efforts. In December 1944, he became the only scientist to resign from Los Alamos.

He has campaigned for peace ever since. "I will not stop working every day just because I have become famous," he said. "I still believe I can see world nuclear disarmament before I die." TR

Today's other birthdays: **Martin Balsam**, actor, 76; **Walter Cronkite**, US anchorman, 79; **Prof Arthur Forty**, principal, Stirling University, 67; **Elgar Howarth**, musician and conductor, 60; **Rodney Marsh**, cricketer, 48; **Michael Meacher**, MP, Labour's transport spokesman, 56; **Joan Rodgers**, operatic soprano, 39; **Ralph Sutton**, jazz pianist, 73; **Loretta Swit**, actress, 51.

Tomorrow's birthdays: **Richard Annand VC**, 81; **John Berger**, author and art critic, 69; **Art Garfunkel**, singer and composer, 54; **Gen Sir John Hackett**, soldier, scholar and author, 85; **Steve Miller**, founder, the Steve Miller band, 52; **Tatum O'Neal**, actress, 32; **Lester Piggott**, jockey, 60; **Rear-Admiral Andrew Richmond**, former chief executive, RSPCA, 64; **Roy Rogers**, actor, 83; **Anthony Rolfe Johnson**, tenor, 55; **Sam Shephard**, actor, 52; **Paul Simon**, songwriter, producer, 53; **Sir Anthony Tennant**, chairman, Christies, 65.

Another Day

November 4, 1774: I went home and saw my wife and Veronica, then dined with the Colonel at his lodgings, and, as he was to be busy, just drank half a bottle of port; then sallied forth between four and five with an avidity for drinking from the habit of some days before. I went to Fortune's; found nobody in the house but Captain James Gordon of Ellon. He and I drank five bottles of claret and were most profound politicians. He pressed me to take another; but my stomach was against it. I walked off very gravely though much intoxicated. Ranged through the streets till, having run hard down the Advocate's Close, which is very steep, I found myself on a sudden bouncing down an almost perpendicular stone stair. I could not stop, but when I came to the bottom of it, fell with a good deal of violence, which sobered me much. I was amazed that I was not killed or very much hurt; I only bruised my right heel severely. I supped at Sir George's. *Boswell: The Ominous Years. Heinemann, 1963.*

George Dunnet

The obituary of George Dunnet (*October 30*) was written by Professor William Mordue and not by Derek Ratcliffe. We apologise to all concerned.

Face to Faith

Following the Crusaders

Fazlun Khalid

INTER-FAITH dialogue has always caused me problems not because of any reluctance on my part, but because during the 40 or so years of participating in these encounters, I have felt that people were not willing to commit themselves to anything beyond a superficial treatment of the issues that have affected relationships between faiths. Ending a meeting with tea, biscuits, and a handshake may not be a bad thing but one leaves feeling a little empty.

The opportunity arose for two of us, a Christian and a Muslim, to change the rules of this game when the BBC invited us to journey to Jerusalem to make a programme marking the 900th anniversary of the Crusades. We retraced the steps of the first Crusaders, exploring ideas and being frank with each other.

The Crusades were an astonishing journey by any stretch of the imagination and the results were startling. It was the first encounter between Islam and Western Christianity which unfortunately was to express itself as territorial conquest. Today, to "crusade" means to campaign for something that is positive, to protest against injustice. The Crusades were anything but this. It was a religious war mounted by one faith against another which has left a painful legacy.

Christianity preaches peace but a strange theology of violence emerged to justify the Crusades. The word Islam comes from a root that means both peace and submission, yet it was the Muslim encroachment on Christian Byzantium which is said to have precipitated the Crusades.

We took the route through Aleppo and Damascus. These two predominantly Muslim cities were repeatedly attacked by Crusaders, but what I was to discover there was both surprising and refreshing. Our hosts in Aleppo were the Syrian Orthodox Church; I found a remarkable accommodation between the Christian Arab minority and the Muslim Arabs. Here was both the dialogue and the tolerance I was looking for and yet it was not advocated in any formal sense. Nurtured by centuries of living together, relations between them were natural and unforced. They were separate but one. The Christians still spoke the ancient Syriac and were equally familiar with Arabic, its sister language. The clergy, with their distinctive habits, moved among the Muslims with remarkable ease.

It was a surprise to discover the mausoleum of the Prophet Zakariya, the father of John the Baptist, occupying a prominent place in the great mosque in Aleppo. In Damascus, the mausoleum of John the Baptist himself (the Prophet Yahya for Muslims) is a focal point in the great mosque built by the Ummayads, Islam's first ruling dynasty. As is to be expected, Christians visit these shrines frequently. On reflection, these shared shrines may have something to do with the rapport that exists between Christian and Muslim in this part of the Middle East.

What is amazing is that the first Crusaders ever got to Jerusalem; the city was captured in June 1099, less than four years after Pope Urban's call to arms in Claremont, France. The Crusade took an arduous route and exacted a heavy toll both of men and equipment. So bitterly divided were the Muslims they did not even attempt to prevent the Crusaders reaching the holy city. In fact, the Crusading armies were helped on their way by rival Muslim rulers eager to get rid of the invaders.

When I was in front of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, I was reminded of the generosity of the second great Khalif of Islam, Umar ibn Al Khattab. After his conquest of Jerusalem in 638, he was being shown around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church. On hearing the Islamic call to prayer, the Patriarch invited the Khalif to pray in the church. He refused and prayed by the main door, saying that if he was to accept the Patriarch's invitation, his followers would turn the church into a mosque.

It crossed my mind that, but for Umar the holiest shrine in Christendom would now be in the centre of a mosque. Sharing such a shrine could have been a source of continual friction but the Muslims' good custodianship of Christian shrines could also have bequeathed a tradition of tolerance as it has proved in Aleppo and Damascus.

The Muslim attitude to tolerance stems from what Islam teaches about neighbourliness. The Koran exhorts the believer to be kind to one's neighbour in the same verse as it asks such behaviour towards parents (4:36). The Prophet Muhammad emphasised this in many ways in his teachings by asking his companions to "put a little more water in the soup and see if your neighbour needs some."

My most important enduring memory of my journey was the deep-rooted tolerance between Christian and Muslim in the Middle East which survived the savage episode of the Crusades. This relationship is in stark contrast to the animosity shown towards Muslims in the West.

Fazlun Khalid is founder director of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences. His series on the Crusades starts on Radio 4 on November 8.

Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Money Guardian

Week-long campaign reminds people of rights

Cliff Jones

MONDAY sees the start of National Consumer Week, intended to raise the profile of consumers' rights. This year's campaign, entitled Home Guard 95, focuses on home improvement and safety.

The Institute of Trading Standards Administration, which is promoting the week, has organised consumer-awareness events around the country. It says home improvements account for almost 20 per cent of consumer complaints, ranging from costly extended warranties for electrical goods to expensive and shoddy work carried out by cowboy builders.

Many people are unaware of their rights and fall for the hard sell of pushy sales staff. For example, customers who buy electrical goods are often persuaded to purchase the retailer's bad-value extended warranty. Sales staff who receive commission for the sale of each policy promote the warranties as peace of mind for consumers who often have no idea of the repair costs for items they are buying.

A report from the Office of Fair Trading found the warranties largely to be overpriced and a waste of money. For example, the average repair cost of a camcorder is £40, whereas retailers' five-year warranties ranged in price from £121 to £199.

In most cases, warranties offered by retailers were more expensive than those offered by the manufacturer. There is some doubt about the need for any kind of warranty. Electrical goods have, on average, a 25 per cent chance of needing repair in the first five years. When goods do break down, it is more likely to be in the first 12 months, when the event will probably be covered the manufacturer's standard one-year guarantee.

The institute hopes that National Consumer Week will make people more aware of their rights when it comes to home improvements. According to the Office of Fair Trading, typical complaints from consumers include being pressurised by builders into paying for unnecessary work. Some consumer report losing large deposits to rogue traders who vanish before completing work — sometimes before starting it.

This year's National Consumer Week coincides with a report by Consumers' Association which finds that hard-sell techniques are back with a vengeance.

The association, which attributes the resurgence to inadequate consumer protection rules, cites as an example the experience of one woman who had asked a double glazing firm for a quote. The salesman, who had said that the process would take around one hour, did not leave her home until eight hours later, by when she had been persuaded to sign a finance agreement which meant she would have to pay £11,000 for £4,000 worth of windows.

The association discovered builders who use similar techniques to pursuade homeowners to part with money for home improvements which are then never carried out.

Careful planning is the best way to avoid cowboy builders. People should obtain a written quotation from a firm before both parties agree on a written contract. If possible, it is safer for the customer to pay in stages while the work is being carried out rather than risk handing over a large sum of money before the work has been completed. Customers must not feel pushed into paying for what builders may wrongly describe as "emergency repairs". People hiring builders should never give credit card details over the phone after an unsolicited call offering work.

It is important to be vigilant when choosing any contractor.

Not only should consumers obtain several quotes for a job, they should ask how long the company has been in business and find out whether it is a member of any trade organisations which can guarantee against shoddy work or builders who cease trading.

People who are not happy with building work carried out on their homes can seek advice from their local consumer advice bureau or trading standards office.

The highlight of National Consumer Week will be a phone-in which will take place all day on Wednesday. Callers will be able to consult advisers about consumer issues on 0345 626 699.

The Home Improvement guide to planning and managing building work is available from the Office of Fair Trading on 0181-398 3405.

Plastic system requires surgery

Cliff Jones and Ian Wylie

THE country's two largest credit authorisation systems were brought to their knees for several hours last Saturday, leaving retailers unable spot to fraudulent card use by customers.

Barclays and NatWest, who operate the PDQ and Streamline retailer credit referral terminals, apologised to retailers after hundreds of thousands of shoppers around the country whose cards could not be properly authorised were turned away or asked to return with cash.

Barclays, which operates the world's largest card checking system, authorises around 1.2 million UK credit card transactions on a typical Saturday. But the bank admits that fewer than 60 per cent of transactions were authorised on-line last Saturday because of a bug in the system's software.

The country's second largest credit referral system also experienced trouble, but for a different reason. The NatWest Streamline system suffered a huge backlog of calls which delayed card authorisation.

Shops rely on the terminals before they accept a customer's credit card as payment. If the card has been reported lost or stolen, the computer notifies the police and flashes a message telling the shop assistant to retain the card.

Barclays and NatWest have contingency systems which allow retailers to telephone the bank's authorisation offices, where operators can verbally authorise transactions. Retailers who were forced to rely on the back-up system on Saturday were issued with emergency codes which allowed them to process purchases of up to £1,000.

But because of the volume of transactions being handled last Saturday, many retailers found the lines to Barclays jammed. As a final resort, retailers who had them were forced to dust-down manual "zip-zap" machines to make a note of credit card details — but according to Barclays, many retailers have forgotten how to process paper-based transactions.

In the run-up to last Christmas, credit card transactions soared to £6.7 billion worth. On one pre-Christmas Saturday, Barclays recorded 35 credit card purchases every second. With Christmas only seven weeks away, retailers and shoppers will be hoping there are no further hiccups.

Big bananas . . . Chairman David Sainsbury greets customer Susan Rolston and son Thomas PHOTOGRAPH E HAMILTON WEST

Sainsbury in card counter-attack

Nick Pandya

SHOPPERS should this weekend be celebrating the outbreak of a price war between the major supermarkets declared by Sainsbury's, bruised by the success of its rivals' loyalty cards.

Sainsbury announced that it would be cutting prices and sqeezing profit margins after weaker than expected sales figures for the first half of the year. The Tesco loyalty card has proved more popular with customers than Sainsbury feared and it is now preparing a tough counter-attack.

Other retailers considering loyalty cards include the pharmacy chain Lloyds Chemist and bookseller WH Smith. WH Smith is testing its version of a loyalty and discount card in the Dublin branch of its Waterstone's chain.

Safeway is running a high-profile television advertising campaign encouraging customers to opt for its customer loyalty card, which amasses points linked to their shopping bills.

Shoppers can redeem their points to secure either reductions in their shopping bills or on a variety of special offers.

For example, anyone with 1,000 points can opt for two tickets for the price of one at Madame Tussauds or Alton Towers, £60 off a Royal Doulton breakfast set priced at £89 or a free P&O ferry crossing to France.

The Safeway card follows the Tesco card launched earlier in the year, which now has six million cardholders, although there are some differences between the cards. Safeway customers earn points on as little as £1 whereas Tesco Clubcard holders must spend a minimum of £10.

Tesco card members get their vouchers every three months by post, while Safeway cardholders can have money-off vouchers printed at the check-out whenever they like.

Over six months, the average family of four spending around £75 a week at Tesco or Safeway should save around £20.

Sainsbury, which at first derided the Tesco card, is next month planning to revamp its saver card scheme launched last July in selected stores.

Cheap petrol can also be a loyalty incentive.

Sainsbury, for example, offers 5p off every gallon of petrol for every £25 you spend in the store. Asda gives its customers petrol coupons to spend in the stores.

Cost-conscious customers might consider signing up for all three cards.

They should then look at the differences in actual prices charged before deciding which to go for. Note that with the Safeway card customers can spend their points only in the store in which they have registered.

Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

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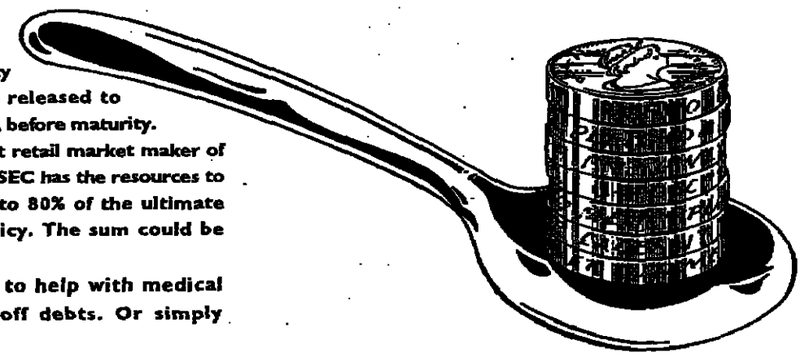

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Rival steps in with merger plan as Japanese bank reels from US closure order over trader's huge losses

Daiwa takeover imminent

Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo and Pauline Springett

THE crisis-stricken Japanese bank Daiwa was yesterday close to being taken over by its bigger rival, Sumitomo. Daiwa, still reeling from the scandal of its recent £700 million losses on the US bond markets, also warned it was axing some of its operations.

Seven international offices are to close and the London operation is to be shrunk. Sumitomo said it may hire some of Daiwa's 347 US employees, purchase some of Daiwa's assets including retail branches and loans, and help to soften the impact in other foreign markets as Daiwa winds down its US operations. On Thursday, the American central bank, the Fed, ordered the closure of Daiwa's US operations and federal prosecutors brought criminal charges alleging a cover-up over the huge losses of rogue trader Toshihide Iguchi.

Sumitomo said that a complete merger of the two banks was on the cards. "We will provide any support needed, anything we can. There is a possibility that a merger with Daiwa will be one of the options," said Yoshifumi Nishikawa, a Sumitomo managing director. Analysts welcomed the prospect of a takeover. Sumitomo, also based in Osaka, is one of the world's top three banks with more than £300 billion of assets, and is said to be strongly managed. Such a merger would do much to restore Daiwa's tarnished credibility and could ease the pressure on Japanese banks generally.

Daiwa's president Takahashi Kaiho said in Osaka that the bank would overhaul its global business, possibly shutting down its branches in Seoul and Taiwan.

Peter Clarke, deputy general manager of Daiwa in London said it was not clear how the changes would affect the UK operation, which employs 105 people, working in wholesale banking, treasury operations and capital markets. He said the London operations were totally separate from those in the US.

The Bank of England said an investigation had failed to find any irregularities in Daiwa's UK operation. It said: "The Bank of England has conducted an investigation of Daiwa Bank in London under Section 39 of the Banking Act and by means of routine visits by its own staff and jointly with the Securities and Futures Association. These investigations have uncovered no evidence of irregularities of the kind discovered in the US." A team from the Bank of England will visit Japan next week for a routine meeting with Japanese authorities.

Daiwa faces a 24-count criminal indictment in the US which could lead to fines of $1 billion and prison for senior executives.

Mr Kaiho said that Daiwa would fight the charges and said the punishment "seems a little extreme, considering we are the only ones hurt. We never had any plans to cover it [the losses] up."

He cited insufficient knowledge of US law for the bank's failure to report the losses at once. But the US Federal Board said Daiwa had been guilty of "a pattern of unsafe and unsound banking practices and violations over an extended period of time."

Tokyo's ministry of finance responded to the crisis by banning Daiwa from opening any new overseas offices.

It also ordered the bank to reduce its overseas lending and restructure and improve its securities operations. The ministry accused Daiwa of having broken Japan's banking, trust business and foreign exchange laws.

Daiwa's chairman, Sumio Abekawa, immediately resigned, although he had already planned to quit after the current crisis had been dealt with.

Bundesbank backs Kohl call for tougher EMU terms

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY'S powerful central bank yesterday threw its weight behind Chancellor Helmut Kohl's campaign to tighten and toughen the terms for admission to a single European currency.

Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank chairman, told a Frankfurt symposium that European Union member states lining up to join the single currency, scheduled for the beginning of 1999, would need to conclude binding agreements on fiscal policy once the currency is launched.

Mr Tietmeyer's remarks strongly suggest that Germany is bent on going beyond the EMU criteria laid down in the Maastricht treaty, in order to offset the risks of fiscal laxity once the single currency is operational. They were echoed — but with even more emphasis — by Edmund Stoiber, the Bavarian prime minister and an ally of Mr Kohl, in Bonn.

Two weeks ago, Mr Kohl's ruling Christian Democrats adopted a policy paper demanding that EMU candidates adhere to "permanent, integrated economic and financial policies." At a cabinet meeting on Thursday, the party resolution became government policy. To judge by Mr Tietmeyer's remarks yesterday, the Kohl line also has the blessing of the Bundesbank.

Mr Stoiber went further in spelling out what might be entailed. "Currency stability . . . cannot be put at risk, not even after the launch of economic and monetary union," he said in his inaugural speech as president of the Bundesrat or parliamentary upper chamber. He referred to the single currency as the Euro-mark.

"That's why a stability pact supplementing the Maastricht treaty is necessary. There have to be guarantees that the Euro-mark is not jeopardised by diverging and unstable financial and economic policies among the various states. The stability pact also has to include effective sanctions."

Although Bonn is insisting that the Maastricht criteria be hardened, it is eager to avoid reopening the treaty negotiations, knowing that that could be a death sentence for EMU.

Mr Stoiber described the 1999 target date as "ambitious", reflecting the dawning realisation here that EMU's launch will need to be pushed back. He warned that a division of Europe could result if not enough countries qualified to enter EMU by 1999. That could hurt Germany, as the continent's biggest exporter.

The market gives Bob Seelert's rights issue the sweet kiss PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

Cordiant seeks £126m

Tony May

CORDIANT, the struggling advertising agency, launched a debt-busting £126.6 million rights issue yesterday and found a warm City welcome.

In a well-trailed move to pay off some of its £130 million of net debt — on which it has been making annual interest payments of £20 million — the agency, formerly Saatchi & Saatchi, is asking shareholders to buy one new share at 60p for every one they hold.

The group's shares, down 44 per cent since the board ousted the former chairman Maurice Saatchi in December, recovered 7p to 91p.

"It's absolutely fantastic news," said Paul Richards, an analyst at the brokerage Panmure Gordon & Co. "The stock looks very cheap indeed and could go to 107p in the medium term." Cordiant has also renegotiated bank loans.

The company's chief executive, Bob Seelert, said the deal would provide a solid financial base for the group's future and reduce gearing substantially. He added that revenue expectations for the second half were slightly better, but the improvement would be offset by higher operating costs.

Mr Seelert was to receive a bonus of £104,000 for completing the financial restructuring, but is exchanging it for shares in the issue.

The group said the results for 1995 would include "significant exceptional costs" of about £51 million, of which £27 million relates to disposals, £17 million to cost-savings and £3 million to pay for departed executives. A further £4 million was paid over extended banking facilities.

There was no reaction yesterday from Alastair Ross Goobey, chief executive of Hermes Pension Management, which is a Cordiant shareholder, who said last month that the drop in Cordiant's share price was a sign of long-term damage caused by the loss of Maurice Saatchi.

Notebook

Golden chance for BA to take balanced view

Edited by Alex Brummer

WHENEVER any Conservative policymaker is forced on to the backfoot over a privatisation foul-up the response is always the same: think British Airways. The £900 million privatisation of Britain's flagship carrier in 1987, bringing in its wake major changes in the balance sheet and work practices, created conditions which allowed BA to become the most profitable airline in the world. In fact, it is the only western airline to navigate the global downturn of the early 1990s with any degree of confidence.

It is as well to remember, however, that the success of BA was not just the result of privatisation. Its stranglehold on gates and premium slots at Heathrow, the world's busiest international terminal, provided it with impressive market power. Moreover, the combative management approach of Lord King and Sir Colin Marshall meant that competition was swept aside with a degree of ruthlessness uncharacteristic in British business.

The list of those wiped out over the decades includes Laker, Air Europe, British Caledonian and Dan Air — Virgin only survived because Richard Branson fought back with the same kind of doggedness which is driving him towards his forthcoming attempt to fly non-stop around the world in a hot-air balloon.

What has been missing from BA's boardroom is any sense of ethical balance. Robert Ayling, who now steps up to become the company's chief executive, via a career in the law followed by the Department of Trade and Industry, provides that. He is widely seen as the person responsible for restoring the airline's reputation after the Virgin debacle. He represents the reformers on the BA board. Lord King and Sir Colin have paid the price for their ethical lapses.

Ayling's elevation, marked by a sharp rise in BA's share price, has several plusses attached to it. Firstly, it means that the upper echelons of the BA board now fully comply with Cadbury: Sir Colin becomes non-executive chairman and Mr Ayling chief executive, restoring the checks and balances.

A second reason to welcome the change is that it provides an opportunity to review the airline's global ambitions which have never properly been fulfilled. BA's efforts at creating global alliances by taking equity stakes has been disappointing. Despite heavy investment in partnerships with Qantas Airways, Deutsche BA, TAT European Airlines, Air Russia (no longer mentioned) and USAir Group, the returns have so far been a relative disappointment. It has been less a global strategy, more a series of bilateral partnerships.

This is partly due to the bizarre nature of commerce in the skies, which is still ruled by a bilateral regime based around the 1944 Chicago Convention, when the rest of the world's commerce and services are now governed by the multilateral rules of the World Trade Organisation. If the shareholders are patient enough the strategy may eventually work, but other carriers, like NorthWest/KLM, appear to have settled for more ambitious code-sharing arrangements to go with the equity swaps.

Mr Ayling's immediate task will be to bring BA out of the USAir deal with some honour. It already has written down around half of its £251 millions stake in the US airline so if the carrier does reach a deal with United Airlines or American then it may well have a chance to reclaim some of its investment. But it also has a great deal at stake in USAir's new ownership. Shared facilities with USAir are worth upwards of $100 million (£67 million) a year to BA through marketing, code-sharing and through-ticketing.

Clearly, BA would be both a financial and a marketing beneficiary if United Airlines does win control of USAir and in the process sparks another bout of airline mergers in the US. But this is delicate territory for BA which once sought its own takeover of United Airlines.

Under its new staff ownership, UAL has clawed its way back in recent years and is now a fully fledged transatlantic rival to BA and presumably will not be wanting to give its British rival, which has sought to keep the US carriers short of slots at Heathrow, any further advantage. The Marshall legacy to Ayling may not be quite as golden as boosters of the world's favourite airline would have us believe.

Tax temptation

CONSERVATIVE MPs believe there is little to discuss about the Budget. Taxes need to be cut by as much as possible, perhaps on a rolling basis to straddle the general election, and Mr Clarke should not be squeamish about taking the axe to public spending in order to pay for the reductions.

The template for this approach is the Government's success during the 1980s and early 1990s in cutting taxes in the run-up to the Budget. As such, we had a double indexation of tax allowances in 1983, the cut in the basic rate of income tax from 30 pence to 29 pence in 1986, followed by another two pence cut three months before the 1987 election and Norman Lamont's introduction of a 20 per cent band in 1992.

However, the implication that the Government can get away with a scorched earth policy towards public spending just so long as it delivers tax cuts, is somewhat simplistic. It is not just that targeting capital projects when the construction industry is in deep trouble is daft, but the unmistakeable truth is that in almost every cycle since the war, public spending as a proportion of GDP has increased in the year before an election.

There have been the odd exceptions — notably 1987 — but even then there was no question of cutting spending, merely an acceptance that the increase would not match the rate of GDP expansion.

But in 1992, the Government let public spending rip, giving ministers the scope to drip-feed the electorate with good news stories about by-passes, campaigns to reduce hospital waiting lists and school-building programmes in the months leading up to polling day. The voters may not respond so well to longer waits, ward closures and bigger classes.

C & G chief wins lavish pay deal of £580,000 after Lloyds takeover

Patrick Donovan City Editor

THE chief executive of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, Andrew Longhurst, enjoys one of the most lavish remuneration packages in the home loans market, with a bonus-related salary which could pay him up to £580,000 a year, it emerged yesterday.

Mr Longhurst, whose contract stipulates that he should be paid twice his annual salary if he is sacked, also received a £175,000 one-off bonus for his work in a "strategic review programme" which started three years ago.

He is the only director in the company, which was taken over by Lloyds Bank last year, with a service contract of more than 12 months. Details of his employment terms were disclosed yesterday as Lloyds unveiled its formal offer document for its £13.6 billion merger with the TSB.

The contract says that Mr Longhurst has seen his salary increase from £333,720 to £400,000 as from this September to "reflect his involvement with Lloyds". In addition, he stands to pick up a performance package worth up to 5 per cent of his salary and another "senior management" deal which could yield him a further 40 per cent.

The offer document also revealed that an extraordinary general meeting is to be held for Lloyds shareholders on November 27 to approve the deal. A further meeting for TSB investors has been tabled for November 29.

Sir Robin Ibbs, chairman of Lloyds, said: "We firmly believe that the prospects of both groups will be greatly enhanced." The offer document warned that job losses, "achieved largely on a voluntary basis" could be involved.

Tax officials blamed for more firms going bust

Sarah Ryle

BUSINESS leaders clashed with senior tax officials yesterday as they accused the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise of contributing to a sharp rise in the number of firms going bust this year.

According to the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) survey published yesterday, 3,919 companies went out of business between July and September, 12.6 per cent more than in the previous three months. There was also a 30 per cent rise in compulsory liquidations which, added to new housing sector figures showing a downturn in new building work, reflected the weakness of the recovery.

The BCC deputy director-general, Richard Brown, said: "Typically it will be the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise forcing these companies into liquidation. We would urge them to take a broader view." An Inland Revenue spokesman rejected the criticism: "Wherever possible we will negotiate a voluntary arrangement."

VAT officials also denied they were too tough. They said many firms did not sort out their difficulties early enough, with fatal results.

A spokesman said: "If there are real problems then sadly, at the end of the day, we have no option but to exercise the option that every creditor has, which is to seek to recover their debts by having the company wound up."

The housing sector also suffered during the summer. Department of Environment figures showed the number of new homes started in the three months to September was down by a seasonally adjusted 7 per cent on the previous three months.

● Reports that the Government is to axe its road programme prompted a warning from the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors to the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, that this would "devastate the civil engineering contracting industry".

BA names Ayling as new chief

Keith Harper Transport Editor

FURTHER changes at the top of British Airways were predicted yesterday following the announcement that Bob Ayling, BA's group managing director, is to take effective control from January 1.

Sir Colin Marshall, BA's current No 1, will remain as chairman but in a non-executive capacity. He will continue to be closely involved with BA, but will pursue outside interests as well.

The move comes at a critical time for British Airways as its United States partner, USAir, is in talks that may lead to a takeover bid by United Airlines or American Airlines.

Neither United nor American is likely to let BA keep a stake if a purchase goes ahead. This would probably force British Airways to seek another partner in the lucrative US market, essential to its goal of becoming a "point-to-point" airline that can deliver passengers seamlessly anywhere in the world.

The management changes were welcomed in the City, with the company's shares rising 8p to 474p.

Mr Ayling's position as chief executive, confirmed at a board meeeting yesterday, fuelled speculation among staff that he would quickly embark on a number of key changes at senior level by bringing in new people.

Mr Ayling, aged 49, who has been group managing director since 1993 and is currently on £508,000 a year, said: "I inherit the management of an airline which Sir Colin helped to transform to the first rank in world aviation. I will build on the strengths that have helped us achieve that position. These include a highly committed and highly talented workforce.

"I see my task as ensuring we have a company culture and management style equal to that challenge in the years ahead."

Mr Ayling has had a meteoric rise to the top. His new role will add finance, corporate strategy and government and industry affairs to his responsibilities. He has served in a number of jobs since being recruited as legal director 10 years ago. Before joining BA, he was a civil servant at the Department of Trade and Industry and a solicitor in private practice.

Mr Ayling is credited with building the airline's reputation following the Virgin débâcle, but he has not backed away from implementing a rigorous cost-cutting exercise which resulted in record pre-tax profits of £452 million for 1994-95.

Technological dodo reborn as German amusement park

Dutchman ends civil war by spotting fun potential, reports Dan Atkinson

GERMANY'S quarter-century civil war over nuclear power, spanning more than two decades of pitched battles with riot police, mass demonstrations and boiling passions, has come to an end in a carnival of candy-floss, burger vans and "thrill rides".

Kalkar — the federal republic's hugely expensive and never used fast-breeder atomic reactor — is to be turned into an amusement park to be called Kern-Wasser-Wunderland — Nuclear Water Wonderland.

Now we know the destination of the protestors' "long march through the institutions"; it was a £27 million entertainment centre with water sports, cinema, restaurants and a 2,000-bed hotel.

Kalkar cost its backers (principally the Bonn government) £3.2 billion and generated not one watt of electricity. This was the ultimate technological dodo, whose construction began in 1974 just as faith in the benefits of science was waning across the western world.

Undaunted, the project ploughed on through ever-choppier waters until, in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, the German government admitted defeat and declared the reactor would never go into operation.

It took a Dutchman, Henny van der Most, to spot the family fun potential of this whitest of white elephants. There are even suggestions that the huge reactor cooling towers may become part of the roller-coaster "attraction."

Now, no doubt, the British Government is hoping to offload some of its own technological follies on to the obliging Mr van der Most and his empire of family amusement parks.

Our own fast-breeder reactor at Dounreay in Scotland is an obvious proposition, although its attractiveness may be a little blemished by the fact that, unlike Kalkar, it operated for many years, up until March 1994.

Not that this need necessarily pose an insuperable barrier — Germans are notoriously fussy about environmental cleanliness, unlike the more robust British family.

Then there is the rusting Blue Streak rocket, the abandoned Advanced Passenger Train, the assorted cancelled London ring-motorways and, of course, the late-lamented Hovertrain.

Hours of family fun could be had aboard redundant Polaris submarines, and the entertainment potential of the never-built Hotol spacecraft is great indeed.

All those un-ordered Concordes could be airborne once Mr van der Most gives the word, as could the (cancelled) TSR2 strike-bomber.

Banks misled into thinking loan would be repaid early

Maxwell trial

Ian King

ROBERT Maxwell misled bankers into believing that part of a "jumbo" loan to Maxwell Communication Corporation, his quoted publishing company, would be repaid early, his son Kevin told an Old Bailey court yesterday.

Mr Maxwell said his father had wanted to give bankers the message that MCC would be able to pay off £750 million of loans before they fell due in October 1992.

The admission came when the crown prosecutor, Alan Suckling QC, read from an internal Lloyds Bank memo, which said September 1991 was a "torrid month" for Robert Maxwell Group, a key private company in the late tycoon's business empire.

Kevin Maxwell denies conspiring to defraud pension funds by misusing £100 million worth of shares in Scitex, an Israeli printing company. He, his brother Ian and financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg each deny one similar charge.

The Lloyds note, by corporate banker Brian Brown, said Kevin Maxwell was "counting the days" until the receipt of money raised from the sale of Scitex shares. The note went on: "The cash position is tight, and there is nothing to spare."

Mr Suckling asked: "Did you say that, Mr Maxwell? You may not like the phrase, but you were 'counting the days'."

Mr Maxwell replied: "Scitex was an important disposal. It dealt with a number of debts owing to banks which were to be paid."

The case continues on Monday.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.02	France 7.49	Italy 2,475	Singapore 2.19
Austria 15.20	Germany 2.185	Malta 0.5425	South Africa 3.58
Belgium 44.75	Greece 364.00	Netherlands 2.45	Spain 187.50
Canada 2.06	Hong Kong 12.00	New Zealand 2.37	Sweden 10.37
Cyprus 0.70	India 54.42	Norway 8.68	Switzerland 1.75
Denmark 8.46	Ireland 0.98	Portugal 230.00	Turkey 77,898
Finland 8.69	Israel 4.75	Saudi Arabia 5.90	USA 1.5450

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Malaysia boom favours UK's Euro-rivals

Keith Harper in Kuala Lumpur

EUROPEAN businesses will be cheered by the news from Kuala Lumpur this week that the Malaysian economy is growing at an impressive 9.5 per cent this year. Meanwhile, the British continue to suffer the fallout from the Pergau Dam affair.

The Malaysians are very pleased with Europe. Behind the United States, Japan and Singapore, it is Malaysia's largest trading partner. The British are there, but they are not talked about so much. One disgruntled businessman, thumbing through the pages of the New Straits Times after the publication of yet another robust Malaysian budget, remarked disconsolately that "we are not getting much of a look in these days". The Pergau Dam wounds take time to heal.

The figures speak for themselves. Over the past five years the EU's exports to Malaysia have increased from 2,495 million ecu (£2,079 million) in 1990 to 5,764 million ecu last year. There is still a trade deficit between the two partners to Malaysia's advantage, but it has been reduced.

The Malaysians have much to be pleased about. There is virtually no unemployment, which has produced a shortage of skilled labour, and Malaysians enjoy the same job security Europeans did 30 years ago.

Jatjudin Mal is a salesman, who returned home after studying and working in Britain for 10 years. His mother was unwell and he was glad to give up an unrewarding job in an Indian restaurant in east London.

At Port Dickson, Malaysia's fashionable seaside resort 50 miles outside Kuala Lumpur, he enjoys a standard of living to which he could never have aspired in the UK. His three-bedroomed house cost him £15,000, which has enabled him to get married with very little capital, and he has a lifetime of job security to look forward to.

Meanwhile, the British ministerial teams and trade missions that regularly pass through Kuala Lumpur will have been heartened by Malaysian government assurances given to the Trade and Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, that the British are welcome.

But doubts remain as British firms failed to win contracts for a major capital project to be built within 40 miles of the capital. Here a new administrative centre is expected to lure half-a-million people from Kuala Lumpur in an attempt to relieve the capital's appalling congestion. A new international airport and a railway connecting the two centres is also planned.

The Pergau Dam fiasco was at its height when the Malaysians were handing out the contracts. The Brits were brusquely treated, although all is not lost — UK exports are currently £1 billion a year, and were up by more than 30 per cent last year.

Britain's best chance of success is to link up with its European partners. This has been achieved with much panache in the middle of Kuala Lumpur where Taylor Woodrow is helping to build a £600 million light rail transit system through the most densely populated parts of the city. Its main partner is AEG of Germany. Both Britain and Europe can only benefit from such joint ventures which could go a long way towards laying the ghost of the Pergau Dam.

Whistle stop . . . Doctors, paid little more than the average industrial wage, protest noisily outside the health ministry in Prague PHOTOGRAPH: PETR JOSEK

Doctors disturb industrial peace

Joe Cook in Prague

THE Czech Republic, widely perceived as a paragon of post-communist economic reform, saw its first bout of serious labour unrest this week when doctors downed stethoscopes in a one-day national strike in support of a 20 per cent wage claim.

"This was forced upon us by the government and its three years of disinterest," said Dr Eva Klimovicova, one of an estimated 8,000 doctors who travelled to Prague to demonstrate outside the health ministry.

Czech public-sector doctors receive a gross monthly salary of 8,100 koruna (£197) which is little more than the average industrial wage and less than junior workers in the financial services sector.

The Doctors' Professional Club, which led Wednesday's strike, claims 80 per cent of the country's 16,000 public-sector physicians and surgeons stopped work. The doctors are continuing their protests, refusing to handle such administrative matters as the issue of birth and death certificates.

Olga Havlova, the wife of President Vaclav Havel, has expressed her support for the doctors, and their strike is the most visible sign yet of the crisis facing the country's health service.

Last month, Prague's biggest state-run hospital, Motol, became the subject of a bankruptcy suit filed by Sanitas, a pharmaceutical distributor, over an unpaid bill of 50 million koruna. The hospital has been unable to pay because of insufficient funding from the government.

Spending on health care has soared from 4.5 per cent of GDP in 1989 to 8.4 per cent last year, as the government's attempt to reform and privatise the health service has been exacerbated by both a big increase in the cost of drugs and the introduction of what is widely seen as an ethically dubious funding scheme.

Hospitals and clinics receive government funds on a fee-for-service basis, whereby their income is based on the number of patients they treat. This system works handsomely for private clinics, which duly reward their physicians. But it places immense pressure on state-run clinics and hospitals, which are being forced to perform as many treatments as possible to drive up their income — and it is their low-paid doctors who bear the brunt of this pressure.

£5bn sell-off rouses Italy's watchdog ● Mediobanca first to be bitten

Investor power boosted

John Glover in Milan

EUROPE'S largest sale of shares will get under way on November 21 as privatisation of ENI, Italy's national energy concern, begins with the sale of between 17 and 24.5 per cent of the company.

The sale is expected to raise more than £5 billion, which will be used to pay some of the government's awesome pile of debt.

A week later, when trading in the shares begins, the provincial pond of Milan's small and volatile stock exchange will have to take account of a massive new entrant. Such is its size that ENI will raise the total value of the companies quoted on the *borsa* from about 17 per cent of GDP to 19-20 per cent.

ENI will make up 13-14 per cent of the Mibtel index — based on the top 30 companies — taking over from the insurer Le Generali as the biggest stock and reducing the weight of the financial sector in the index from 44 per cent to about 40 per cent. "This is part of the evolution towards a market-oriented exchange rather than a bank-oriented one," said one London analyst. According to Francesco Cesarini, of the Milan stock exchange council, the flotation "will give a shine to a troubled market".

The arrival of a large corporation that is directly owned by shareholders rather than indirectly controlled by the distant heirs of a founding family will be salutary for the *borsa*. The Milan exchange has never been famous for its transparency. Change has been snail-paced. Minority shareholders, from pensioners with a handful of shares to investment funds with millions, rarely enjoy the same privileges as the owners of controlling stakes. Analysts regularly complain that outside investors lack reliable information.

The *borsa* is stuffed with companies known as "Chinese boxes", or "matrioskas" — inside one there is another, identical but smaller. The *matrioska's* role in life is to own a controlling stake in another company, which in turn controls another. At one end of the chain is the operating company, which supplies dividends and power to its owners. At the other is an unquoted holding company owned by family and friends, which directs the activities of the operating company with a real stake generally of around 5 per cent.

The system was described by economist Luigi Einaudi, governor of the central bank after the war, as "the artful administering the capital of the ingenuous".

Some foreign investors don't think much has changed. A foreign fund manager this week was quoted as describing the Italian market as "a joke".

But the joke may be turning sour. For the past two months the market has been depressed by plans for a mega-merger cooked up by Mediobanca, the secretive Milan merchant bank. This was to marry Ferruzzi Finanziaria, the box that controls asset-rich Montedison, with Gemina, another holding company. Disgusted foreign investors voted with their wallets and the index crashed.

Having provoked a rebellion among the banks that own almost 70 per cent of Ferfin's shares, the plan culminated last week in a bourse showdown during which Mediobanca spent £100 million to buy just over 10 per cent of Ferfin to ensure it and its allies retained control.

During the battle for Ferfin, Consob, the *borsa* watchdog, appeared paralysed. But after Mediobanca's blitz, supervisors ruled that Mediobanca must launch a public tender offer for the same number of shares it had already grabbed, costing another £100 million.

The move was warmly welcomed. "This is very significant, because it shows that Consob is acting in shareholders' interests and that it has the ability to do so," said Bernadette Attard, a European fund manager at Baring Asset Management in London.

"The point is that Mediobanca is not calling the shots in the same way as it once was," said Anthony Mannara, chief of research at Milla & C, a Milan brokerage.

None of this means that Milan is about to become a paragon of transparency. But Consob's ruling has, in the words of a Milan fund manager, "restored some dignity to the market". And, as the plans for the ENI flotation show, companies needing to attract foreign capital have to meet international standards.

Metall leader bends on pay

Katerina von Waldersee in Bonn

IN A surprise move that could set an example for other European countries, the leader of Germany's most powerful union, IG Metall, has broken long-standing taboos to offer employers substantial concessions on wages in return for job guarantees.

Klaus Zwickel's "alliance for work" plan, presented at IG Metall's annual congress this week, comes at a time of stubbornly high unemployment, exacerbated by German companies increasingly moving production to cheaper locations abroad.

Even though the congress representing 2.9 million engineering workers re-elected Mr Zwickel with a majority of more than 92 per cent, the 56-year-old official's proposals were greeted with derision by members of the traditionalist wing, who immediately accused him of "hob-nobbing with the pinstripe suits".

However, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government, under fire from the unions for planning to cut unemployment and welfare benefits, described the offer as interesting and worthy of attention.

Under Mr Zwickel's plan for wage negotiations in 1997, the union will be prepared to accept pay rises in line with inflation, departing from its tradition of exacting settlements well above that level.

The present wage agreement, reached after a short strike last March and valid until the end of 1996, gave IG Metall workers a two-stage increase of 3.4 per cent in May and 3.6 per cent this month in a deal criticised for being way above the inflation level of under 2 per cent.

In return for keeping wage demands low, the IG Metall plan demands the creation of 300,000 jobs over three years, guarantees for job maintenance and the opportunity for 30,000 long-term unemployed to find work.

Mr Zwickel said he was willing to accept reduced wages for the long-term unemployed and was promptly booed by some congress delegates. Two years ago, IG Metall poured scorn on the chemical industry union IG Chemie for making a similar concession.

With Europe's highest wages, shortest working hours, longest holidays and earliest retirement, German workers are pricing themselves out of jobs in a country where working practices have long been inflexible.

"The biggest problem in Europe at the moment is unemployment and IG Metall's willingness to make concessions on wages could well set the tone in other countries," said Peter Pietsch, economist at Commerzbank in Frankfurt. "Mr Zwickel's proposals are well worth talking about even though it may not be easy for employers to give job guarantees in the present economic environment."

Putting steel in the Czech and Slovak resolve

JOE COOK in Prague examines the role of a key industry in the post-communist revival

CZECH and Slovak steelmakers are slowly but surely recovering from the slump brought on by the collapse of communism in 1989. Although they are unlikely to see a return to the days of mega-production for Russia, domestic demand has stabilised, exports to the West have grown substantially and foreign investment has started to trickle in.

Slovakia's steel industry, in particular, has come through the post-communist turmoil with flying colours. This is mainly due to the giant VSZ Kosice steelworks, built at Moscow's behest in 1959 to serve the former Warsaw Pact's industrial-military complex.

Investment in modern, efficient equipment during the 1980s has enabled VSZ to sell its specialised steels at competitive prices worldwide.

The company earns 20 per cent of Slovakia's hard currency by exporting 75 per cent of its output, a third of which goes to the European Union. Such trade has allowed VSZ to retain its 29,000-strong workforce — in a country with 13.2 per cent unemployment.

VSZ has even expanded abroad, buying the Finow steel mill in former East Germany and pumping $200 million (£129 million) into an iron-ore venture in Ukraine.

Things are not so clear-cut in the Czech Republic, where annual production has plummeted from 10.7 million tonnes in 1989 to 7.1 million tonnes last year.

In contrast to Slovakia's VSZ, the three biggest Czech steelmakers are each lumbered with out-dated equipment and are the subject of an EU anti-dumping investigation. Perhaps mindful of both foreign predators and the unemployment figures in North Moravia, the region where all three steel companies are based, the Prague government has banned foreigners from their privatisation and postponed the privatisation of two until next year.

This could prove problematic for Nova Hut, the biggest Czech steel firm, which is negotiating with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private lending arm, for a $307 million loan to help finance what would be Central Europe's first "minimill".

A consortium of US engineering firm ICF Kaiser, American steel company Trippens and South Korea's Samsung Heavy Industries has won the contract for the plant, which will produce 1.1 million tonnes of steel a year.

The problem for Nova Hut is that the IFC lends only to companies which are at least 51 per cent privately-owned: the government's decision to delay Nova Hut's full privatisation has left a question mark over the IFC's involvement. The company is, however, confident of raising finance elsewhere.

There are no such hassles for Trinecke Zelezarny, the second biggest Czech steel maker. The government recently sold a 51 per cent stake in the firm to Moravia Steel, which is 25 per cent owned by a former Czech tennis star, Milan Srejber.

Moravia Steel paid 2.64 billion koruna (£64.4 million) for its stake in Trinecke and has pledged to invest a further 17 billion koruna over the next decade. Four unnamed domestic banks are behind Moravia Steel.

The EU anti-dumping investigation of the Czech steel industry was instigated by Eurofer, the EU steel producers association, which claims the Czechs are undercutting western prices of iron and non-alloy steel beams by 37 per cent. Not so, say the Czechs, who say the westerners have got their calculations wrong.

Rhône in Spain proposal outrages French farmers

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

AN AMBITIOUS plan to divert part of the Rhône river from France to northern Spain is being threatened by French farmers who want their drought-hit Spanish competitors to be left high and dry.

The plan by the Bas-Rhône-Languedoc (BRL) water company to build a 300km aqueduct to carry Rhône water from Montpellier to Barcelona, would go into operation in seven years' time and is thought to be the world's first cross-border water scheme.

Jean-Paul Pelras, president of the Southern French Young Farmers' Union, said a French water company should not supply foreign competitors. "We don't want our river to water the crops of farmers who are already undercutting us," he said.

His organisation — one of the most powerful lobby groups for vegetable and fruit farmers — was behind several blockades of lorries carrying Spanish strawberries to France over the summer.

The French farmers are being taken so seriously that Artur Mas, the Catalan public works minister, has said he will provide a written guarantee that water bought from BRL is channelled only towards homes and industry.

But Mr Pelras was unconvinced: "Don't tell me that next time there is a drought in Valencia or Murcia they won't divert the water supply. At the very least, the extra water for Barcelona will free up supplies for farmers in drought areas."

BRL, whose £1.1 billion scheme is a likely candidate for European Union funding, has permission from the French state to draw 80 cubic metres per second from the Rhône. But it has use for only 20 cubic metres per second and would like to sell part of the surplus to Spain.

On top of Spain's five-year drought, Catalonia is facing a worsening water shortage, due predominantly to the recent growth of Barcelona. According to the BRL feasibility study, the city will need to impose permanent water rationing in the year 2012 unless a solution can be found. BRL believes it can meet all of Catalonia's water needs with supplies from the Rhône.

Model terms for the catwalk professionals

JOHN GLOVER on a plan that could make 'il fisco' a fashion accessory

ITALY, home of Armani and Valentino, means style, design and the world's largest fashion industry. And fashion means models. Lots of them, from the super-glamorous Naomis, Claudias and Lindas, through the 500-odd lesser-known names who lend colour during the shows, down to the thousands who show off designs in factories and showrooms to the buyers from M&S.

These are the foot-soldiers of the catwalk, a new model army on the bottom rung of the glamour-industry ladder, headed upward or downward depending on talent, looks and the vagaries of fashion itself. For them, work turns up irregularly and is often poorly paid. The industry is far from being a model of good industrial relations.

Looking enviously at the clout of professional associations of lawyers, engineers, accountants and doctors, Italian models are now pushing for the creation of their own "albo", or professional roll. Professional associations see that their members meet certain minimum standards — and enforce generous fees.

A law proposed by Giuseppe Scozzari, a fashion-conscious deputy, would "charter" models who would need to have worked for at least a year, earning a minimum of £1,200.

The albo would agree standard contracts with the agencies, based on tariffs approved by the industry minister, and models would have to register with their local chambers of commerce. In return, the albo would guarantee customers they were hiring a real model, not any old model off the street. And the system would force models to pay taxes.

The rag trade is in two minds about the idea. It views with glee the prospect of the glamorous foreign girls to whom it pays such huge fees forking over part of the loot to "il fisco", as the taxman is known. It is less impressed by the idea of a ministerial model tariff scale.

Most of all, the fashion trade wants to be free to choose who models the clothes on the catwalk and who stays in the dressing room, Italian or not.

"Sooner rather than later an albo would turn into a corporation to exclude foreign models," says Enrico Bono, of the industry association Modaindustria.

Update

☐ Shares in Fokker rose after reports that the Dutch government is willing to provide the cash-strapped aircraft maker with 800 million guilders (£320 million) aid if the other big shareholder, Daimler-Benz Aerospace (Dasa), comes up with the remainder of the funds needed. Two months ago the company presented a business plan asking for 2.3 billion guilders. The economics ministry declined to comment. — *Bloomberg*

☐ Industrial production in Germany fell 1.9 per cent in September from August and declined 2.9 per cent from a year earlier, the economics ministry in Bonn said. The decline was unexpected, but the ministry expects final figures to show a "clear" upward revision. — *Bloomberg*

☐ Bass increased its stake in the Czech Republic's third-largest brewer, Prazske Pivovary or Prague Breweries, its third investment in the Czech beer market in a month. It raised its stake in the brewery to 43.7 per cent from 40 per cent for an undisclosed price. — *Bloomberg*

European Business is edited by Mark Milner

Modelling joins the professions, page 23

Daiwa sees Sumitomo as saviour, page 22

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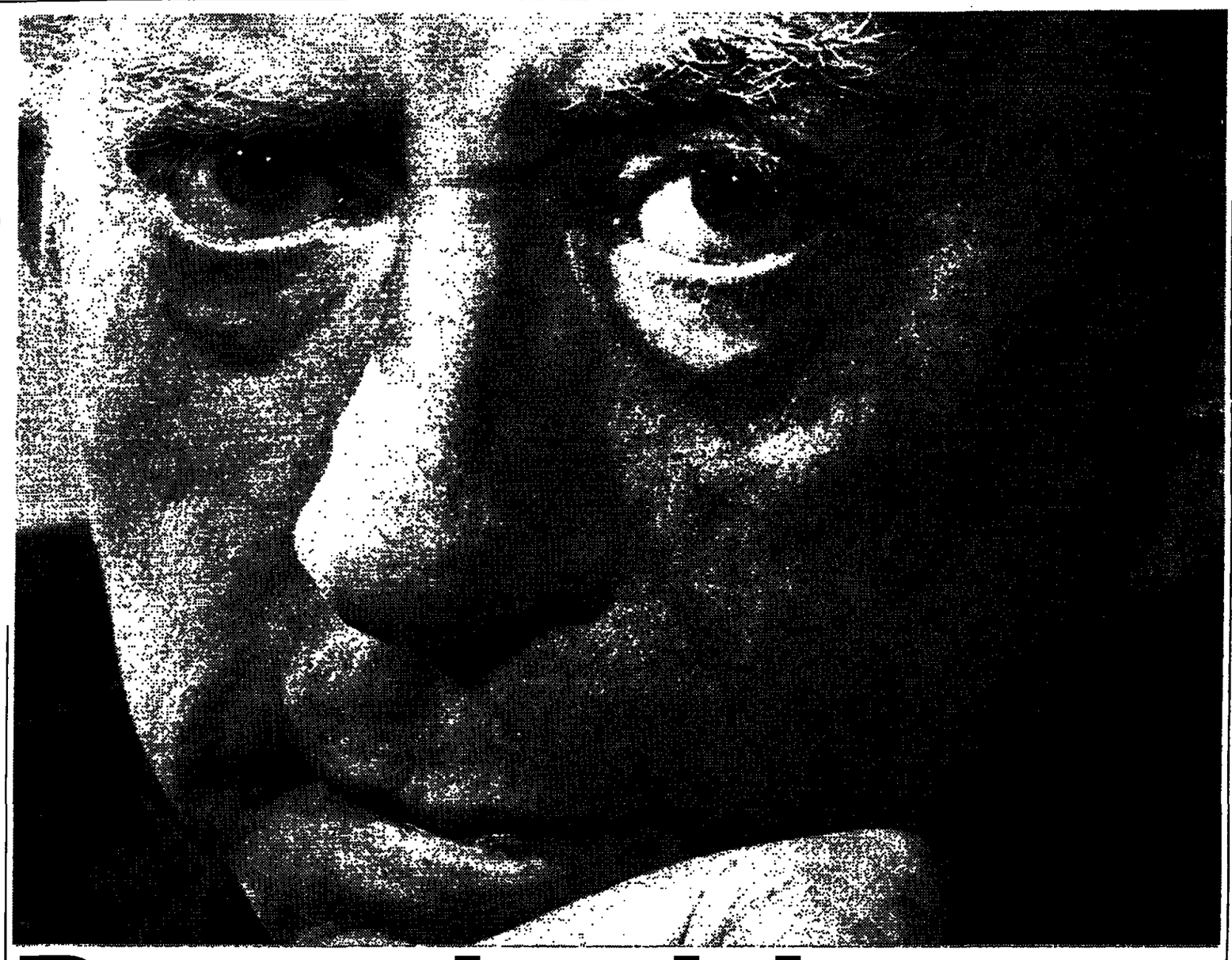
Finance **Guardian**

Oil, drugs, money and mutilation. The Getty saga has all the makings of a classic tragedy. But, writes DAN ATKINSON, the family may not yet be a spent force in the world of business Titans



J Paul Getty . . . rich blend of sex, splendour and parsimony Photograph by Karsh

Demonised dynasty

ALL THE world loves a lover, they say, and the left loves a lord, but Britons in general reserve their strongest passion for rich-yet-unhappy industrial dynasties, preferably American and preferably grown fat on something vaguely disreputable, such as oil or the newspaper business.

The dynasts' tales of woe confirm all our deepest-held convictions that money can't buy you happiness, that handsome is as handsome does and that — when all is said and done — wealth without breeding is a recipe for misery.

And they didn't come much richer or more miserable than the Gettys. Three short generations contain enough misfortune to power several episodes of Cracker. One (probable) suicide, one drug addict married to a fellow junkie who took an overdose, one Aids victim, one bankrupt and one youngster kidnapped and mutilated by Mafia elements.

In the finest traditions of the genre, this menagerie of misfits was the creation of a patriarchal founder, J Paul Getty, himself riddled with insecurity and with more than a touch of mental instability. His meanness was of the highest order: he had a pay telephone installed in his Surrey mansion and once charged a son £9 for lunch. Another son was lent $1 million with interest to meet the ransom demand on his child.

Any time would be a good time to tell this tale on British television. But Meridian's timing in broadcasting its two-part Getty family history now seems particularly fortuitous. When Time magazine blew J Paul Getty's cover in 1957 and named him the richest man in the world, he and his fellow near-billionaires were unusual even in the United States and positive freaks in social-democratic Europe.

Today, for the first time since the end of the 19th century, the colossal, almost sovereign, personal fortune is once again a feature of the commercial and political landscape: as the Goldsmiths and the Soroses shake the earth, it seems wise to take a close look at some of their immediate predecessors.

The Getty family tree spreads its branches in all directions, but the apprentice Getty-watcher need keep just three facts in mind: the crabby, mean patriarch was J Paul Getty, who died in 1976; the one with black hair and sunglasses, who joined the 1960s love train, grew up into Britain's biggest philanthropist and has received an honorary knighthood, is his son J Paul Jnr; the one who was kidnapped in 1973 and had his ear chopped off is J Paul Jnr's son, Jean Paul III.

Oil was the heavy-duty fuel that propelled the Getty fortune ever upwards, and, in the convention of industrial dynasty sagas, each generation of Gettys became progressively less interested in the black stuff and progressively more interested in gentility, however defined. The family's first oilman was J Paul Getty's father, George, a devout Christian Scientist who struck lucky in the oil business.

J Paul Getty followed George into the oilfields, and — as a voice-over in the Meridian programme has it — "He didn't love anyone . . . only money, only oil."

Yet this wasn't strictly true. J Paul eventually succumbed to the non-commercial charm of landed-gentry status and bought himself a Tudor mansion in Surrey from the Duke of Sutherland; Sutton Place looked like a set from A Man for All Seasons and, as lord of the manor, J Paul dispensed party food to groups of children and worried about burglars.

Alongside this interest in gentility had been J Paul's alleged interest in politics; his Hotel Pierre in New York in the 1930s was targeted by the FBI, which suspected it harboured a Nazi spy ring. J Paul had been seen with girlfriends some of whom had been close to Adolf Hitler; he was tarred with the Nazi brush and barred from important government work during the war.

Then there was his interest in sex: in the five years from 1923 he married and split from three teenage brides. He was to get through five wives in all, not to mention the harem of beautiful and intelligent women he kept at Sutton Place.

Finally, there was his museum in Malibu, California, an undertaking suggesting that — deep down — J Paul Getty was aiming not so much for the rank of an English squire as the standing of a senator in ancient Rome. Modelled on the Roman villa at Herculaneum, it was stuffed full of the treasures of the earth. There were hints that Getty was influenced by his old acquaintance, the press tycoon William Randolph Hearst, and the legendary Hearst pleasure dome at San Simeon.

But if J Paul Getty aspired to quasi-monarchical status, his instincts remained those of the cash-obsessed oilman. The museum's bills were scrutinised and director Stephen Garrett was blasted for his "extravagance" in ordering an electric pencil sharpener (he ended up paying for the gadget out of his own pocket). In Britain, J Paul asked his friend the Duke of Bedford how much each of his weekend guests "cost" him. His Grace replied that he had not the faintest idea. Getty wandered around Sutton Place in frayed shirts and holey socks.

Nevertheless, J Paul Getty began the gentrification process which gathered momentum in the next generation. J Paul Jnr once headed Getty Oil in Italy, but has long since settled into the role of philanthropist and English gentleman. The beneficiaries of his largesse — more than £100 million over 15 years — include Lord's Cricket Ground, the National Gallery and the British Film Institute. Asked how he felt, as an American, to be receiving an honorary knighthood, he replied: "I don't feel like an American to tell you the truth." No, quite.

His brother Gordon pursues an equally gentle course; worth $1.5 billion, he donates heavily to the opera house in his home city of San Francisco and composes music, some of which is performed.

It was Gordon who broke the link between the Gettys and the oil world; in the 1980s he made a deal with Penzoil, under which he would become chairman. Eventually, Getty Oil went in 1984 to Texaco for the then mind-boggling sum of $10 billion. During the takeover talks, it had been the museum, with its 10 per cent stake, that held the key block, a neat illustration of how the Getty saga was coming full circle.

Linked to this first strand in the story — the gradual distancing of the family from the grubby fountainhead of its fortune — is a second theme concerning the perils of great wealth at a time of social turmoil.

J Paul Jnr, in his pre-philanthropist phase, became embroiled in the sex-and-drugs atmosphere of the 1960s, with tragic results. His second wife, Talitha (apparently an even more extravagant swinger than him), died of an overdose in 1971; J Paul retreated into deep depression and a diet of rum and heroin. Worse, the drug-taking ethos had been passed to his son Jean Paul III, as had a lackadaisical attitude to life in general. It now seems likely that — as was long suspected — the 1973 kidnap was a jape cooked up by Jean Paul III and his hippy-ish friends which went terribly wrong. A male nurse, who had looked after Jean Paul after his drug-induced seizure eight years after the kidnapping, claims Jean Paul said he and his friends staged the snatch, but he had been sold out to the local Mafia.

The five-month ordeal included beatings with chains and blindfolding; the kidnappers sliced off his right ear and posted it to reinforce the ransom demand. Even here, Getty bad luck intervened: a postal strike delayed the gruesome package for three weeks.

Jean Paul's release in December 1973 concluded an *annus horribilis* for the Gettys. Earlier in the year, J Paul Getty's son George died of an overdose of alcohol and barbiturates.

Social change wrought havoc elsewhere in the family. Jean Paul III's sister Aileen suffers from Aids, but her response to the illness is a marker of the third strand in the saga: the sobering-up of the younger members.

Aileen — through fund-raising and testimonial banquets — has, in the words of the programme, learned to live. Meanwhile, her nephew Balthazar, an actor, enthuses over the joys of work and of paying for his own rent and petrol.

Today, with the trust broken up among its members, the Gettys are no longer a great financial force in America. Yet bidding them farewell would be premature: the fourth, and final, strand is the planned resurgence of the family, led by J Paul Jnr's son Mark. Declaring that "there are no parallels between myself and my grandfather", he is nonetheless chivvying the younger Gettys back into business.

When all is said and done, perhaps you just can't keep a good dynasty down.

The Gettys will be shown on ITV on November 7 and 14.

Family matters

- 1892 J. Paul Getty born;
- 1932 J. Paul Jnr born;
- 1956 Jean Paul III born;
- 1971 J. Paul Jnr widowed after wife Talitha dies of drug overdose;
- 1973 Jean Paul II kidnapped, mutilated and returned after payment of $3 million ransom;
- 1976 J. Paul Getty dies;
- 1984 Getty Oil sold to Texaco;
- 1995 J. Paul Getty's grandson Mark declares intention of rebuilding Getty family business.

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Fashion cul-de-sac

Lisa Buckingham

THE problem with following fashion is that hardly anyone thinks about why they are doing it — until it is too late. And by then the world is sniggering behind its hand because what appeared stunning on the catwalk looks altogether more dubious on the rest.

The examples of business sectors hurtling headlong to adopt whatever is the latest trend or buy themselves the "must have" bauble of the moment are almost too numerous to mention.

But the consequences for all but a few have been disastrous. Think only of the rush into buying estate agents when almost any independent observer — and the estate agents — could see that the bubble was about to burst. Third World debt was another fiasco, as has been the UK corporate foray into the US.

Clearly when a market leader sparks off a new phase in an industry its competitors are bound to respond. But, as the newspaper price war has demonstrated, it is usually only the first off the blocks which makes any substantial gain and a simple me-too reaction is one of diminishing returns.

Such unhappy historical baggage is the reason why any business fashion should be regarded with the utmost scepticism, particularly when it is clear that hardly any players have assessed the changing market dynamics and the rest are simply in danger of a knee-jerk, copy-cat reaction.

Take the hyperactivity of the financial services sector at present. There has been a wave of mergers in the building society world, many of whose members cannot wait to shed what they now regard as dowdy mutualism. The insurers are at it too — Norwich Union is thinking about going public, other mutuals are effectively touting themselves for sale and there are rumours almost every other day that there will be a bid for one of the large composites. But it is the high-street banks which are setting the pace.

Given the banks' none-too-glorious record when it comes to spending rather than earning money, this should be sounding alarm bells even though the reasons for getting bigger and bigger appear coherent.

This week the big computer services group, Hoskyns, has put its own spoke into the financial services feeding frenzy.

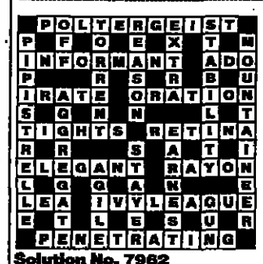
Steve Webb, Hoskyns' director of banking, risked going out on a limb by warning that mergers and acquisitions amongst banks, building societies and insurance companies could actually put the big players in danger, making them lose sight of the rapidly changing demands in the retail financial services sector. Size could also impair ability to respond quickly, he said.

Sadly, it will probably turn out to be the equivalent of a gnat's attempt to be heard above the roar of M1 traffic.

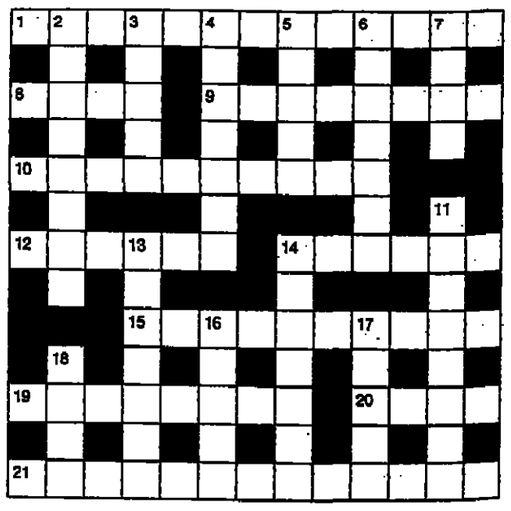
Mr Webb was clearly going on to suggest that good information systems could keep such mammoths fleet of foot. But nothing can rescue a myopic management from the truth that there is no miracle to be had from combining one mediocre company with another mediocre company.

You simply end up with an even bigger follower of fashion.

Quick Crossword No. 7963



Solution No. 7962



Across

1 Deceptively happy state (5,8)
8 Sparkling Italian wine (4)
9 Wealthy (8)
10 Airliner's crew compartment (6,4)
12 Current (6)
14 Annul (6)
15 Taught (10)
19 Dandy — pasta (8)
20 Gown (4)
21 Nacre (8-2-5)

Down

2 Outmoded (8)
3 Prone — to mendacity? (5)
4 Apparition (7)
5 Strip — a firearm (5)
6 Intoxicated (7)
7 Transmit (4)
11 Recall (8)
13 Grave inscription (7)
14 Welsh capital (7)
16 Search thoroughly — and flush out (5)
17 Oath (5)
18 Nimbus (4)

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